



cinema Canada

#58

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**CANADIAN FILM
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE CINÉMA-TÉLÉVISION**

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CFTA AWARDS 1979
Friday, November 2, 1979 at 7 p.m.
Dominion Ballroom, Sheraton Centre Hotel, Toronto

Description Of The Film and Tape Categories

1. Television Specials

Single, self-standing productions of a non-documentary (dramatic, variety, entertainment) nature for use on television.

(An individual production in a series such as CBC Superspecial qualifies under TV Special rather than TV Series.)

2. Documentary

Productions of a non-fiction nature either for use on television or for corporate, institutional or other non-television use.

(Productions qualifying in previous Awards as Travel & Recreation, Nature & Wildlife, or Sports now come under this category.)

3. Television Series

One episode from a series for use on television may be entered in this category, whether the series is documentary or non-documentary in nature.

4. Sales Promotion

Sales aid for a product or service.

5. Public Relations

Productions made to aid in changing public knowledge of institutions or corporations or to insure the dissemination of information to the public.

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Productions made for the prime purpose of teaching the audience certain specific information, rather than just making them aware of that information.

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8. Audio-Video: Portable

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A fixed installation which must be judged in situ by a travelling judge.

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Closing date for entries is September 18, 1979. For more information, contact: Bruce Raymond (416) 923-9654 or John Teeter (416) 363-8374.

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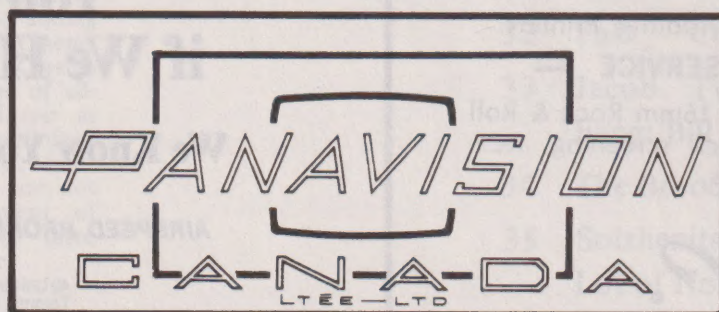
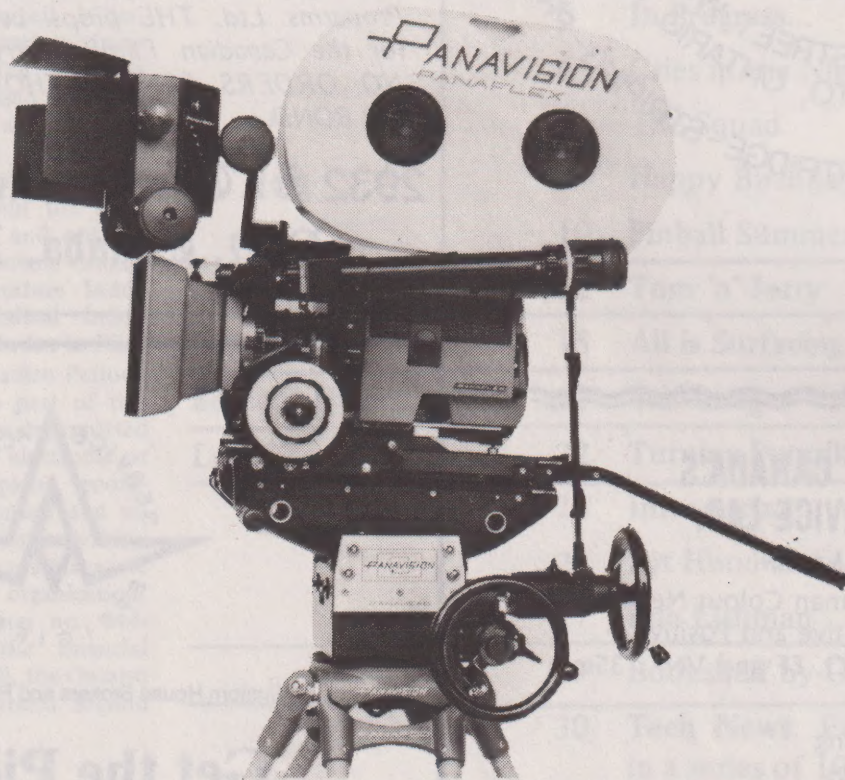
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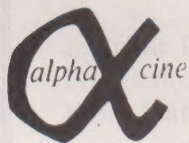
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Cover:

Photographer Edie Yolles gives us a refreshing portrait of Kathleen Beller who plays an attractively cool and remorseless Kate in Claude Jutra's filmed adaptation of Margaret Atwood's **Surfacing**. See page 15.

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response to historical issue no. 56

A Revealing Study, But...

Cinema Canada's special issue on the years 1939-1953 is certainly one of the most valuable and revealing studies of Canadian film history yet published. In all respects, the authors deserve compliments of the highest order.

However, as we are dealing with facts, it is important to correct a few statements made by Kirwan Cox, who appears to have dashed off certain comments about Odeon and Rank without his usual thorough approach.

Page 52, 1st col., last para: The British Government's Ad Valorem tax was imposed only on American films in order to ease the acute drain on Britain's limited supply of post-war dollars. The American companies refused to pay the tax and stopped all films going to Britain for about a period of six months. The tax did not have anything to do with failing production in Canada by Rank or anyone else. So far as South Africa and Australia were concerned, it is news that Rank owned any studios in these countries to shut down! This leads to...

Page 53, 2nd col., 3 para: To fill the gap left by the absence of American films, the Rank Organization (and some other British producers) embarked on a "crash program" to double production. Lord Rank's studios made truly heroic effort, but by the time the films were ready for showing the Ad Valorem tax was replaced by a "frozen assets" agreement whereby receipts were left in the UK to be used for production there. The great flood of US films which then entered the country engulfed the Rank films, resulting in a great loss of money for the company. Yet it continued as before, and made many fine films. It is rubbish therefore to say that "Rank's English production operation collapsed from Hollywood pressure and the advent of television."

As for Leonard Brockington not having Earl Lawson's "energy or knowledge of film business," this too, is inaccurate, and obviously Kirwan never met Mr. Brockington. Had he done so, he would not have forgotten him, or

described him as he did. Although physically handicapped, he had an amazing amount of fire and energy, and was a much sought after lecturer and after-dinner speaker.

He was literate and widely-known, and although he was not of the trade, there was little which escaped his attention, and not much about what was going on that he didn't know! And it is silly to say in the following paragraph that all this ended Odeon's expansion period. The expansion ended because Odeon completed its plans for the number of theatres it required, and there was no necessity for more. And Odeon certainly did not become Famous Players' Junior Partner. A Lively Rival was more like it which gave Famous Players a run for its money. No company which had the immense resources of the Rank Organization behind it could be called Junior!

Page 53, 1st col., 2nd para: Odeon did not sell its circuit "because of the possibility of legislation" (of a Canadian quota). It might be argued that the wave of sentiment expressed strongly at that time by the trade and its supporters in favour of Canadian owned enterprises, influenced the Rank Organization in accepting the offer made by Canadian Theatres. But a quota would not have panicked the company into selling, nor would it have put it out of business by any means. Anyway, Odeon knew, as we all knew, that the likelihood of disinterested federal politicians ever introducing a quota was zero.

And while we are talking about British films, Alistair Brown's opening paragraph of his review of Riel betrays ignorance when he states that "the BBC has brought more prestige to Britain than its film industry ever did." The work of the BBC is certainly to be admired, and it may have reached more people internationally via television than British films did in world cinemas, but British film history is certainly not lacking in prestige. Only someone lacking a knowledge of film history would make such a comment.

Gerald Pratley
Director
Ontario Film Institute

History Repeating Itself

Editor:

I greatly appreciated the articles on the history of the National Film Board and its problems with the politicians of the day. History repeating itself as the NFB is once again under fire, from the economists, cutting back the needed funds, and the private sector wanting the NFB production section to be pretty well scrapped.

From what I have read in past issues of Cinema Canada and CinéMag, I believe that the private sector — and that includes me and many other small operations — has a very legitimate beef in terms of projects being held by the NFB for their own film groups (i.e. government sponsored films), leaving the remaining 15 percent to the private sector. Apparently this also hurts the post-production and laboratory services, since the policy of in-house processing prevails.

The latest act of the NFB is to muscle in on the non-corporate sector of sponsors, namely the Red Cross, National Institute For The Blind, etc. (these are quoted as examples only). So, not only does the NFB want to deprive us of needed government projects, but also steal our remaining sources of revenue as well. The provinces have, also, film departments which produce local sponsored films for government departments.

I think now is the time to remove the right of production of government sponsored films from the NFB. (The latter should be totally scrapped and all work done by the private sector in the provinces.) The NFB would retain some production, say an average of 5x30 minute films per region per year (a total of 25) with equal budgets for each region and regional choice of programme selection, without referring to Montreal or Ottawa. The budgets would be more carefully controlled and be more in line with the private

sector, using all local i.e. provincial freelance crews. Expensive hotels would be out, unless the crews were to supplement expenses personally. Transcontinental plane rides would be at the individual's own expense (here I am referring to bringing producers or cameramen from Quebec to film in BC). All post-production and lab facilities would be handled by the private sector, where available.

The Film Board's forte is in its library and distribution system. This is where most of the effort should be concentrated. I have it on good authority that because of last year's cutbacks, the libraries have totally inadequate funds to provide the required number of prints for use. The NFB would continue to carry films (and hopefully 3/4" video-cassettes in the near future) for the CBC. I fully endorse this and hope that it will grow. The NFB research and development would be increased, with co-sponsorship from the CBC (new video techniques, cameras etc.) and film corporations such as Kodak. The NFB could use its in-house processors for research into new film stocks, equipment testing etc.

The idea of a national film school sponsored by the NFB is truly excellent except it would be based on film craft rather than the cinema theory, so loved by university academics. A graduate with the ability to get the best out of his tools is a hell of a sight more use to the industry than an intellectual critique on Bergman, or whomever.

The NFB's best work is in animation and I hope this will continue with more funds being diverted to it. We cannot afford to lose such craftsmen as McLaren to the European animation studios.

To make the most of the funds presently available, the administration and clerical staffs will have to be cut back, probably by 50 percent. The top administration could be cut by two thirds and joined with the Canadian Film Institute, sharing the same offices and personnel. Both could be united with the National Film Archives. The staff would be reduced by attrition and non-renewable contracts.

I envisage the CBC showing more NFB and independent productions, under a weekly 60 minute programme named the "Grierson Hour." Sunday evening, around 8 pm would be a good time, followed by a movie (preferably Canadian). This would comply with the "CBC commitment" to increase Canadian content to 80 percent over the next few years.

There is a large group of film societies known as the Canadian Federation

of Film Societies (CFFS), numbering some 70 members as of August 1978. The CFFS would form a very good nucleus for an "Alternative Circuit" for the exhibition of films, especially Canadian productions. I would like to see the NFB co-operate with the CFFS in setting up a "more professional" system of film exhibition, using high intensity light(Xenon Arc) portable 16mm. projectors and a "round robin" programme of feature films and shorts. Such a programme of films is offered by Pacific Cinematheque for a very reasonable cost.

The National Film Board does have a future, there is no doubt. It is greatly envied by U.S. filmmakers, who cannot understand why we bitch so much about the NFB's faults. Let us in the industry and the NFB support each other and stop fighting. Don't let politics get in the way of film production. We all have our roles to play in the industry, let's keep it that way.

R. Tarplett,
Exec. Producer

Errata

We extend our apologies to Kirwan Cox who has called to our attention certain errors appearing in his article, "The Grierson Files," Cinema Canada, issue 56. The word "Pricy" was printed in place of the word "Privy" in the following sentence that appeared on page 16: "Arnold Heeney, Clerk of the Privy Council, described the Grierson he knew at this time to an American Embassy of-

ficial, who recorded Heeney's thoughts." On page 24 the word "never" was omitted from the sentence: "Obviously, Hoover never checked his own files before spreading Sinclair's allegations." We are sorry for any confusion this might have caused. Ed.

REVERB

We received the following letters from CFA after Andrew Dowler's article, "Toronto's Super 8 Festival: Increasingly Professional," was published in Cinema Canada issue 57:

I would like to point out that on page 22 second column "Further support from Gunther Hoos view came from TRM Labs of Toronto who gave Festival goers guided tours of their Video Transfer facilities," please be advised that it should have read CFA Labs not TRM. For your information TRM is our competition in Super 8mm, also note CFA is the only Film/Video Lab in Canada and the U.S. that can transfer Super 8mm to Broadcast quality with wetgate.

As a matter of fact since the Festival, we have been doing a lot of work for the U.S. Market, like MIT in Boston, Chevrolet in Detroit, various producers in New York City, Providence Rhode Island, and others.

Yours truly

Andre Desroches
President

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November 12-17, 1979

For information, write to:

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IN PROGRESS...

Cries in the Night

exec. p. Barry Allen, p. William Fruet, d. William Fruet, sc. Ida Nelson, ph. Mark Irwin, p. asst. Goff Martin, a.d. Susan Longmire, wardrobe Mary Jane McCarty, ed. Ralph Bunjes, stills Rick Porter, sound Ian Hendry, continuity Marie-Thérèse Boily, l.p. Kav Hawtrey, Barry Morse, Lesley Ann Donalson, Dean Garbett, Harvey Atkin, Peggy Mahon, Alfred Humphrys, Jack Van Evera, Les Rubie, p.c. Incident at Northampton Production.

Cries in the Night may be the smoothest, most serene of the more than a dozen shoots going in Toronto this summer. Despite weather that's shuffled clear skies, cloud and rain like the pea in the old shell game, the picture is on budget and on time.

A good part of the credit for this must go to the crew, led by Dop Mark Irwin. Most of them have just finished five weeks together in Puerto Rico, shooting *Tanya's Island*. They're thoroughly used to each other and, judging from the comments they made when I visited the set at Lakeshore Studios (where they'd moved after three weeks at the main location in Markham), they've become quite fond of one another. They all seem to work together quite efficiently.

However, legendary gaffer, Jock Brandis tells me the efficiency is all illusion. He suggests that if I listen to the same people communicating on the same subject five minutes later, I'll hear them being just as firm and sure about totally contradictory information. Jock Brandis, however, is a world-class cynic and three-times winner of the Liberal Party of Canada's Lying to the Press Competition. He may be right, but if he is, the chaos is eliciting panicky responses from no one and the work proceeds apace.

The other major factor in the success of the shoot is the schedule itself. Seven weeks (from July 23rd to September 7th) seems a generous schedule for a traditional horror film that doesn't rely heavily on special effects.

Cries in the Night is a horror film of the madman-with-an-axe variety. Teen-aged Heather arrives at her grandmother's funeral home to help turn it into a tourist home. It's the only way the old lady can hang onto the place since her husband, the undertaker,

died. There's one guest already, the affable Mr. Davis, but two others arrive, Harry and Florie. At first they appear to be married but, in fact, they are a salesman and his floozie on a hot weekend. They're murdered. Heather begins to hear voices in the night. Grandma denies that there's anyone in the cellar. More murders. Could it be Hibbs, the grotesque and horny handyman? Is Mr. Davis as affable as he seems? Finally, Heather becomes the target and that leads to the shattering climax in the embalming room.

The script is by Ida Nelson, whose previous credits are in television and include *A Cosmic Christmas*, and producer/director William Fruet is quite pleased with its traditional qualities. He feels that audiences associate more with reality than with the science fiction/fantasy of *Alien* or *Hallowe'en*, making *Cries in the Night* a "marketable commodity." The rumor on set is that he's going for a GP rating, a move that will enhance the film's marketability in a season filled with Restricted horror movies.

The special effects for the film are being done by Dennis Pike and include the shovels that, later that afternoon, are to bludgeon Barry Morse (as Mr. Davis) to death. Pike's problem was to

create something light enough to do no damage, yet strong enough to seem real and not to break. He solved it by casting his shovels in urethane, a lightweight fiberglass. Since urethane can't be painted, he created a realistic look by coating the inside of the plaster mold with a mixture of black paint, latex rubber and aluminum. The resultant rough, dark, metallic finish looks quite realistic.

The look of the picture will be "Ontario Gothic." Mark Irwin is using lots of soft lights and no camera filters for an effect he describes as "Muted, mellow, contemporary low key." The mood will be enhanced by a lot of motivated tracking and deep focus. He adds that the murders are receiving a lot of time, energy and coverage.

Cries in the Night boasts an all-Canadian cast. Grandma is played by Kay Hawtrey, Heather by newcomer Leslie Donalson and Mr. Davis by Barry Morse.

When I mentioned that Mr. Davis appears, in the script, to have little character, Barry Morse replied, "That's very interesting to an actor because it provides a framework into which you can put almost everything. What I chose to do, in conjunction with our director, Bill Fruet, is to make him a seemingly contradictory person, so that one says at one moment, 'Well, he's a very good-natured and soft-hearted and sentimental and rather befuddled old chap.' Then another time, one thinks, 'Well,



A tense moment between Hibbs (Stephen Miller) and Heather (Lesley Donaldson) on the set of *Cries in the Night* photo: Rick Porter



Grandma (Kay Hawtrey) and Mr. David (Barry Morse) on the Elora, Ontario set of *Cries in the Night*

is he exactly what he seems?" The script, I think deliberately, leaves a lot for the actors to do and it's noticeable that a great many good scripts of this kind, in this genre, also leave a lot for the artist to do."

With distribution deals not completed, William Fruet and associate pro-

ducer Patrick Doyle wouldn't reveal the budget, but other sources inside the company put it at around 1.5 million. The film is also undergoing a little change, but that, too, remains and official secret.

Andrew Dowler

The Squad

p. André Link, Marie-José Raymond, d. Claude Fournier, asst. d. Avdé Chiriaess, Michèle St-Arnaud sc. Claude Fournier, from an original idea of John Dunning and André Link ph. Daniel Fournier art. d. Anne Pritchard cost. François Laplante l.p. Harry Reems, Jeff Bowes, Daniel Pilon, Jean Lapointe, Fiona Red, Gilles LaTulippe, Nicole Morin, Monique Le-page, p.c. Squad Film Ltd.

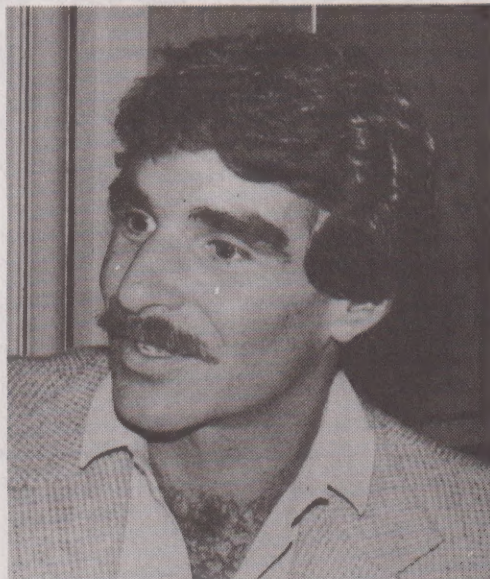
The Squad, due to wrap Sept. 7, began shooting July 21.

"We're on schedule," says veteran Quebec director, Claude Fournier. Then he chortles, "And within budget — this far anyway."

Marie Josée Raymond, producer, production manager and Fournier's partner in Rose Films and real life, permits spontaneity to poke through her cool, artful elegance to explain their success. "We've got a great crew! It's a lot of hard work but a very pleasant shoot."

On set, crew and cast morale is high.

Atop Mont Royale, against a "Giotto Sky," soundman Richard Nichol delays a take to find a "dead" spot for his



Harry Reems stars in Claude Fournier's latest comedy *The Squad*

Nagra. Bent in the cold wind, he shuffles the machine around, aware everyone is waiting. Instead of curses, someone yells, "Don't look for water; look for oil." Soon, a pleased Fournier jigs atop a rented truck. Later, when stunning black newcomer, 6 ft. plus Maggie Crooks (*Fast Annie*) is prone on a patrol car front seat, one foot out the back window, the other out the front, she'll be asked for some foot expressions. Her curling and uncurling toes straighten the kinkiest hair of most male onlookers. Someone mutters her legs are so long they meet at her chest; it's a sight when 5 ft 4 in. Fournier stands before her.

The Squad's budget is closer to \$1 million than the rumoured \$800,000, according to Irene Litinsky of Cinepix/DAL films. They, the CFDC, L'Institut Québécois du Cinéma, and Rose films are financing, though percentages are confidential. Private investors are involved, too; all \$5,000 units were snapped up within four days of the offering.

Daniel Pilon (Frank, "a cop who gets paid to get laid") says the film is "bawdy but not dirty." Purportedly a fast-paced comedy, it was co-authored by Raymond and Fournier. Mr. Clean (Harry Reems) is invited to rid Montreal of sin, having done so to Toronto. The morality squad he heads is corrupt and inept. Each cop's misadventures are depicted as he works under Clean's strait-laced supervision.

In one sequence, Reems and Swanson clumsily search a skyscraper foyer for clues. Suddenly, Reems points down.

Reems: "Pick it up."

Swanson: "But it's only a piece of lint, sir."

Reems: "Pick it up. We've got to start somewhere."

(Exasperated, Swanson wraps it in an oversized plaid handkerchief.)

Reems (taking Swanson aside): "We want the cold hand of the law in this man's pocket."

The "man" is Harry the Flasher (Gilles LaTulippe, praised by all). In the sequence prior, Deborah Weinstein has fainted after slipping a hand into the Flasher's pocket. The pocket has no pouch and everyone knows what's under a flasher's Aquascutum.

Much research has been done, since the authors originally had written a serious vice-squad corruption drama. It was DAL's John Dunning and André Link's suggestion that led to a transformation into comedy, which Fournier has done before (*Deux Femmes en Or*; *La Pomme, la Queue et les Pepins*; and *Je Suis Loïn de toi, Mignonne*).



Actors Daniel Pilon and Harry Reems discuss the shooting of *The Squad* with director Claude Fournier

The film is entirely in English, but will be dubbed in French and released in that version in Quebec, before the English is shown there. A Christmas

release is planned, though this could change suddenly, according to Ms. Raymond.

Much publicity has been milked

from porno star Reem's (*Deep Throat*, *The Devil in Miss Jones*) top billing. Publicists are claiming this is his first attempt at less horizontal cinema.

"That's not quite true," Reems said in a mid-night telephone interview. "I've done relatively straight films in Italy, France, Sweden and, in Tokyo, a pirate film in Japanese."

He claims to have appeared in 150 films. However, *The Squad* is his softest in English, and his first since being tried under U.S. conspiracy laws after charges were laid in conjunction with *Deep Throat*. His successful defense nearly bankrupted him.

Reems found Canadian crews really knew their craft. Not one day passed without 15 to 25 set-ups, compared to three or four elsewhere. This he said was because "they're not spoiled by lavish productions or unions."

Both Reems and Pilon, when asked, were quite candid about Fournier's directing through the viewfinder, instead of from beside the camera. Though favored even by Stanley Kubrick, Reems felt this style disturbs actors, working with them is sacrificed for framing and camera wizardry. Pilon suggested actors are insecure; to do well they need the director's undivided attention. "The director

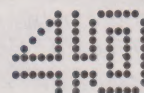
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doesn't have time to take care of everyone and everything."

First assistant director, Avde Chiriaeff, was less severe. "When Fournier does it all, he's anxious to work. It's also faster than explaining things to 25 people, in two different languages. Claude's old school: small budgets, small crews. Then, over-specialization was a liability."

Fournier, 20 years a cameraman, explained, "It's the only way to see what the actors are doing, the only way to get what you want."

Last year he tried the more traditional way of directing but found he spent too much time explaining. He was being surprised — not always pleasantly. "I'm after the story, not beautiful pictures. The audience doesn't care about beauty, but what tells the story."

As for doing everything, "It's fun and it helps to 'decompress.'"

The production is as bilingual as a

box of breakfast cereal. When Fournier shouts, "Cut!", Cheriaeff echoes, "Coupé!" Although like bus drivers shouting, "Rue Peel, Peel Street," not all cast or crew members are bilingual. The first cameraman, Jean-Marie Buquet, according to Ms. Raymond, "the best focus-puller in the business," doesn't know a word of English.

Fournier said, "It causes a bit of uneasiness in the actors. When crew members speak French, the (monolingual English) actors think it concerns them, especially after a take when they are looking for approval. But nothing drastic has arisen. It does mean explaining things two or three times."

Nevertheless, on sked Harry reams clean and Pilon piles on. But the last quote belongs to Ms. Raymond, "The rushes are very nice."

"We, and the actors, too, will have to wait 'til Christmas or later for a peek and hopefully a giggle." Doug Isaac

Happy Birthday Gemini

p. Alan King, Rupert Hitzig co-p. Bruce Colman d. Richard Benner ph. Jim Kelly ed. Donald Ginsberg art. d. Ted Watkins sd. Ingrid Cusiel sc. Richard Benner based on the play Gemini by Albert Innaurato l.p. Rita Moreno, Madeline Kahn, Robert Viharo, Sara Holcomb, Tim Jenkins, David Grant, Alan Rosenberg. p.c. Birthday Productions.

Happy Birthday Gemini began shooting in Toronto on June 20th and should have wrapped on August 3rd. Thursday, August 9th, the crew is setting up to do a major scene in an alley just off King and Bathurst — a week behind schedule and so far over their two million dollar budget that nobody's keeping up the polite fiction of calling it "a little over" or "slightly over."

There have been some problems. What they are depends on whom you listen to. Lisa Wilder, demon continuity woman, blames the weather. In a film with a lot of night exteriors, where every night brings its own blend of clear skies, cloud and rain, the need for matching backgrounds is served by standing and waiting. Gemini is a union film: waiting at night costs money.

Happy Birthday Gemini is the property of executive producers Alan King (the comedian) and Rupert Hitzig. They took the original play, a howling success on Broadway, to director Richard Ben-

ner (Outrageous), who adapted Albert Innaurato's script for the screen. Release will be through United Artists.

The story, as recounted by Lisa Wilder, production manager John Quill and others is this: Francis and Judith were lovers in college. When she and her brother visit him in South Philadelphia

during the summer, she thinks the relationship will continue. But Francis thinks he's gay. The pressures he feels from Judith and his macho father, Nick, lead him to destroy his 21st birthday party. Judith and her brother leave for California. Nick talks to Francis about the need for friends. Francis chases Judith and her brother down and the three of them go off with his sexual identity still unresolved. The plot also involves Madeline Kahn as Bunny, the neighbourhood glamour girl (somewhat faded), her asthmatic son, Herschel (Tim Jenkins) and Lucille, Nick's traditional Catholic girlfriend, played by Rita Moreno.

Francis is played by Alan Rosenberg, who can be seen in *The Wanderers*. Sara Holcomb, who plays Judith has appeared in *Animal House* and *Walk Proud*.

It may not sound like much on paper, but Phil Akin, a bit player in the film who has been involved with the play, says that something happens to it in performance that lifts it well beyond the thin plot line. Phil's had his own problems with the shoot. He's been wrapped off the film twice and then called back for shots that had been simply forgotten. He thinks there are major organizational screw-ups and cites another bit player who's been through the same thing.

The scene is ready to rehearse. It's Francis telling Judith he's gay. While Benner runs his actors through blocking, DoP Richard C. Brooks of New York, lines up the shot. Brooks is not the original DoP. He'd been called in two weeks previously to replace Jim Kelly who had shot *Outrageous* and who,



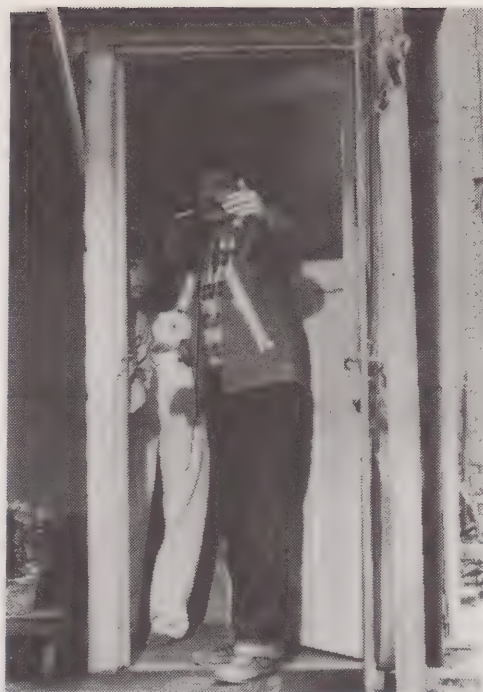
Happy Birthday Gemini: a coming-out party of sorts

according to John Quill, had become sick and had to leave. According to others on the crew, he was fired, either as a scapegoat or because he actually was responsible for the slow pace. Nobody knows, or will say, which. As I'm writing this, Jim Kelly is said to be shooting in the States and, therefore, not available for comment.

Quill, himself, is a replacement for Barbara Laffey, the original production manager who was fired as a result of personality conflicts. She was said to be quite happy to leave the film.

There is talk that there have been other firings, but John Quill won't discuss those. His big problem is that some of his talented and experienced crew members have left to fulfill other commitments and that there just are not enough experienced replacements around. An experienced crew is a speedy crew. He says that the Canadian government has done a fine job of attracting production, now he would like to see them set up an apprentice program so there would be the craftsmen to meet the demand. Without them, he suggests, the boom for making features in Canada could die.

They're ready to shoot, or, they would be if the planes would leave. The



Rita Moreno, Sara Holcomb taking direction from Richard Benner on the *Happy Birthday Gemini* set photo: Gary V. Holiff

location is about a mile and a half due north of Toronto Island Airport. With other locations in Kensington Market, Beverley St. backyards, a trolley graveyard and a banquet hall on Dufferin,

sound recordist Ingrid Cusiell has had her share of problems. But right now, Benner is more concerned with being able to match the noise in post-production that went with a noise-free track, so they roll sound.

Alan Rosenberg does his part basically the same for every take, but Sarah Holcomb plays around with her timing and delivery. Richard Benner watches, makes suggestions and encourages the experimentation. They all three seem involved and unhurried — lots of mutual trust and respect here. An hour later, with the scene in the can, Benner will take John Quill aside and scream at him in the low earnest voice of a man on the verge of murder about some third party on the set who is consistently harrasing him about time.

Despite these hassles, and more besides, the crew is showing a lot of enthusiasm for the film. The rushes are well-attended and more than one hardened techie has praised Benner's handling of the actors and confided that there are at least four scenes in the picture that will leave not a dry eye in the house.

And that makes it all worth while.

Andrew Dowler

Pinball Summer

p. Jack Murphy line p. Bob Presner asso. p. Fred J. Fox d. George Mihalka sc. Richard Zelniker sd. Donald Cohen ph. Fodney Hibbons ed. Ion Webster l.p. Michael Zelniker, Carl Marotte, Karen Stephen, Helen Udy, Thomas Kovacs pub. David Novek and Mary Trees p.c. Criterion Film Productions.

It is rather unusual for business people in the feature film industry to take a chance on young filmmakers, but it is very commendable.

The producers of *Pinball Summer*, Jack F. Murphy, president of Criterion Films, a 16mm distribution company, and Bob Presner, line producer, have taken such a chance. In August, 1978, Murphy approached Presner with the idea, marketing concept and strategy for a low budget picture. Their \$750,000 feature about high school students on the loose during summer break, is scheduled to appear in April. It was shot in 29 days with a crew primarily composed of filmmakers only a few years out of university. In fact, 37 of the 45 crew members had not worked in key positions on feature films previously. *Pinball Summer* gave them their chance to prove themselves.

Presner explains, "I've been in the business 11 years, and I remember how difficult it was for me at that time when there was no feature film industry. I graduated from Loyola in 1969 in Communications Arts with a major in film. The doors didn't open for me. It was a closed shop. My film background didn't help. I was coming up against people who had started in the industry. That's why I try to listen to anyone who comes to me for a job.

Presner, not unlike Roger Corman,

goes to student film festivals. It was at such a festival at Sir George (now Concordia University) in Montreal that he first saw *Pizza to Go* in 1977. The 24 minute color film, quite slick for a student production included an impressive 30 locations, locations that were well chosen and well lit, with a variety of mood and appearance.

The creators of this student film were George Mihalka and Rodney Gibbons, two aspiring filmmakers.

These same two filmmakers were approached by Presner as director (Mihalka) and cameraman (Gibbons). Gibbons had only shot about 800'

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in 35mm prior to *Pinball*.

"School gave us the background we needed — the familiarity with film equipment and taught us how to do everything with nothing," Mihalka says.

Donald Cohen, soundman, Walter Klymkiw, lighting electrician, Chantal Ethier, make-up artist and Otta Hanus, 2nd A.D. from the *Pizza to Go* crew also worked on *Pinball*. Altogether about 20 former Sir George and Loyola students worked on the crew.

But how does a film like *Pinball* go about saving money?

"Someone inexperienced will often waste his time, takes longer to perform a task or will ignore something important," Mihalka adds.

"It was a trade-off," Presner states, "We did not have to pay the same rates for our crew as we would have for people with 5-10 years experience. In exchange, the inexperienced were given the chance to prove their abilities."

"Instead of buying everything, such as \$40,000 worth of motorcycles, we contracted 4 bike owners to be on the set when we needed them. We paid a daily rental fee for the bikes. Therefore, we were able to secure heavy-duty chrome-engined Harley-Davidsons at \$1500 a bike for 6 weeks.

"In addition we required water front locations. Because of a union rule we had to shoot within a 15 mile radius of the Beaubien Metro Station. Anything beyond this area would cost more and include travel time and meals."

Trying to create a wide water coastal look would have been much easier if the crew could have taken off for Maine... But the unit manager, John Desormaux, came to the rescue.

Dressed in a suit and tie, he approached 12 municipalities and took the time to talk to the people in charge. The city managers were met formally with story outlines and details of all the requirements of the production. They were invited to the set prior to filming, and the result was full co-operation and then some.

"On big money pictures producers feel they can buy anything they need," Presner asserts. "Money replaces courtesy and respect."

"At one point during filming we were rained out with massive oceans on our locations. Within a half an hour the City of Dorval helped build us a new road. They brought in truckloads of gravel and a bulldozer."

The filmmakers also proved adept at finding locations. One old broken-down house on St. Joseph Blvd. in



Steve (Carl Marotte, left) and Greg (Michael Zelniker, right) would like to order more than just hamburgers from waitress Sally (Joy Boushell)

Lachine was transformed into "O.J.s," an orange Julip-type restaurant. The place was so convincing that people kept driving off the road to order food, thinking it was real and open for business.

The spirit of the production seemed to be an incentive for everyone to pitch in and help. The people at one old age home liked the crew so much that they kept feeding them, and cops would come off duty to work on *Pinball*.

Casting: It's not easy doing a picture which involves actors who play bikers when the actors don't know how to ride motorcycles. (The bikes for the shoot were choppers weighing in at a mere 800 lbs.) But the people were right for the parts, so the *Pinball* team

decided to ignore this slight problem and to teach them to ride and move like bikers. Tow rigs were built for close-up shots, and stunt doubles were found for the long shots.

Another unique insert is that 7 of the main talent hadn't acted in film before. And one actress, Joy Boushell, was found by casting director Arden Ryshpan late one night at the disco 1234.

It's not easy to cast roles in the 17-19 age bracket in English in Montreal. Contacts were established with high schools, CEGEPS, universities, amateur theatre groups — 160 people auditioned for 8 leads. It would have cost three times as much if the production had gone to Toronto to fill these roles.

"In Montreal, for prestige, they way 'Hey man, we've got all the heavy-duty folks from Toronto.' In Toronto say 'Hey man, we've got all the heavy-duty folks from New York.' We were discovering heavy-duty folks in Montreal," stresses Mihalka.

These young filmmakers are perhaps a new breed. As Gibbons insists, "Film-making is a process, not just a job where you pick up your check and run home."

When he decided to make *Pinball*, Presner was personally told not to have anything to do with it. People thought he was crazy.

"Uncle Bob believed in all of us," the crew says.

Perhaps he will prove something to the industry.

Lois Seigel



The winner of this game of "strip pinball" between Sally (Joy Boushell) and Wimpy (Joe McNamara, centre) will soon reveal herself — in more ways than one

tom 'n' jerry



Tom Litvinkas and Jerry Szczur lounging in the lobby of their prize possession, The Fox Theatre on Toronto's Queen Street East photo: Bill Dunn

by linda west

Tom'n Jerry's story is "an old-fashioned young-entrepreneurs make good story" that can still happen right here in Canada. What it took was hard work, a certain charm and plenty of down to earth business sense.

In 1973 Tom Litvinkas was driving a truck for Molson's. Jerry Szczur was working at Continental Can. In 1974 these two young entrepreneurs had launched themselves on a career as movie exhibitors. Working in the shadow of giants like Famous Players and Odeon, they have managed to acquire four strategically located neighbourhood theatres in Toronto and, while George Destounis is probably not shaking in his boots, Tom 'n' Jerry are doing brisk business and proving to the world that you can charge \$2.50 at the box office and still make money.

Refreshingly blunt and down to earth, Tom and Jerry are the perfect "odd couple." Tom is bigger, more outgoing, the obvious spokesman of the two. Jerry is friendly, quieter and the one to ask for details. It's a combination that has worked well.

Their theatre policy is twofold: show recent second run Hollywood movies at a cheaper price than the downtown run a couple of weeks earlier, and provide a friendly, comfortable atmosphere so that "going to the movies" is the entertaining experience it once used to be.

"We want to put showmanship back into the movie business," said Tom. "We run shorts and trailers along with the feature and our staff is friendly and relaxed. The doorman even lets little kids in free sometimes."

Tom and Jerry also want to revive the idea of the neighbourhood theatre, where people recognize the manager, chat with the box office attendant and generally feel at home. They can walk to the show (that saves energy — at least the non-renewable kind) and have an inexpensive evening out.

Part of the charm of TJ Theatres (as they now call their "chain") is the antique quality of the movie houses. Dating from the art deco period, they still have all their curves and chrome and Tom and Jerry have chosen to restore rather than update the decor. Their prize gem is the Fox which is located right on Queen Street East in the heart of the popular Beaches area of Toronto, itself a throwback to the quieter days of straw hats and boardwalks. Tom and Jerry bought the Fox last year, complete with ten apartments and a vast maze of back rooms and offices, for \$200,000. The apartments carry the operating expenses and the theatre collects around \$3500 a week at the box office. Now the partners are trying to convince Wintario to assist them in restoring the building. They want to clean the bricks, do some paint removing, re-carpet and put in a new snack bar. They are also looking for an old marquee to replace the original one that's been lost.

Another recent purchase in the Tom and Jerry chain is

For the past 8 years Linda West has been working in film and show business as a freelance writer. She has also published articles in Quest Magazine, Canadian Business, The Financial Times, TV Guide and numerous other publications.

the Brighton, a downtown theatre, previously owned by a 72-year-old Polish gentleman who wanted to retire and sold out for \$150,000. The other two theatres, the Richmond Hill, north of the city, and the Kingsway in the west end are leased.

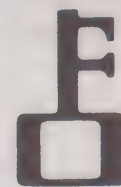
Such high-finance real estate dealings are a long way from the \$6000 investment Tom and Jerry made five years ago when they decided to get into this crazy business. Tom was 22. Jerry was 21. They were both film addicts (as opposed to buffs; they liked bad movies, good movies, any kind of movies). One of their addictions was the 99 cent Roxy, whose biggest claim to fame is it's regular midnight screenings of **The Rocky Horror Picture Show**.

"We thought the city could do with more than one Roxy," they said, "so we started looking around."

In the meantime, they were scanning the papers one night to see what was playing at their local movie house, the Kingsway. They couldn't find any ad. Ah ha! After a few inquiries they found that, sure enough, the old theatre had closed down and was waiting for a new tenant. Only trouble was, their lawyer-accountant told them they needed \$20,000 minimum to start such a business and the most they could scrape together was \$6000.

"So we paid two months rent, painted the lobby, and opened the doors," said Tom.

At first the two partners did everything themselves from taking tickets to sweeping the floor. They sold out the first night and had about 15 people for the rest of the week. During the first year-and-a-half the ticket price was kept to 99 cents, but economy has forced the average price up to about \$2.50 now.



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"We were originally trying to get an older audience," said Tom. "Our first films were two W.C. Fields movies, **The Bank Dick** and **Horse Feathers**. The older people thought the idea of a theatre in their neighbourhood was great, but they only go out to a show once a year. So we changed and went after the teenage audience."

They ran films like **Texas Chainsaw Massacre** and teenagers flocked to their doors. Tom and Jerry have lots of stories to tell about that first hectic year. There were times when someone in the audience would get too rambunctious. They would just hoist him up in front of the audience and say, "Does he go or does he stay?" "Out!" they'd yell and the offending party would be tossed out the door. Audience involvement they call it. Then there was the time they were running **Texas Chainsaw Massacre** and someone actually came tearing down the aisle brandishing a turned on chain saw. (Too much audience involvement.)

And they'll never forget the scene that took place one groggy 3 a.m. The building was open late that night because a theatre group had been using the stage for a play and had to strike the set before morning. When the work was done, everyone got into a bit of a party mood. Someone was pounding a few beats on a set of drums and suddenly, through the front door, came an older man and a young woman who proceeded to waltz down the aisle. Everyone had had a little too much to drink by this time, especially the strange couple off the street, and the lady climbed on stage and began taking off her clothes.

At this opportune moment, a policeman happened to walk in. He was about to book the whole group, when the older man took the officer's arm and led him to one side.

"I don't think I'd lay any charges if I were you," he said. "I'm Judge So-and-so of the local court."

As time went on, Tom and Jerry added the Fox, later the Richmond Hill and finally the Brighton, for a total of 4000 seats. Movie fare at all four theatres is becoming more family oriented now and the cult film is being replaced by second-run mainstream pictures like **The Deerhunter** and **Julia**. They don't mind waiting to get the good pictures.

"The longer they run downtown, the more advertising they get, the better for us," said Tom.

To staff the growing business Tom and Jerry hire mostly students, young people who are interested in movies, eager and friendly.

"We don't want our customers to get rushed through the door by some bored ticket taker," they said.

In the past five years Tom and Jerry have learned a lot about the business. They've learned that the movie industry is controlled to a large extent by a few big monopolies that can make life difficult for the small independent. They have learned that movie house furnishings and equipment are very expensive — \$4500 for a snack bar, \$4000 for an automated curtain, \$16 an hour to install seats that cost up to \$80 apiece to buy. Since most of the equipment is imported, they run into charges like 41 percent duty to bring seats across the border. (And *when* is someone going to start a *Canadian* manufacturing company to service theatres?)

Tom and Jerry have also learned that while their theatres make good money, and their popcorn machines make even better money, it's the distributor who really makes money.

Not long ago, they had a lead on an interesting picture which they thought could become another cult classic. A

distributor in Toronto wanted to charge them \$7000 for the right to run it in their four theatres, so the pair decided to go direct to the New York distributor. There they negotiated

a six-year contract on all Canadian rights (not yet spoken for, as it turned out) for only \$5000.

And so, with the acquisition of **Eraserhead**, a first film by artist-filmmaker David Lynch, Tom and Jerry entered the distribution business. Unlike the branch office general managers of the major U.S. distributors, these fellows don't have to consult New York or L.A. before they make a \$1500 decision (like one case we know) or a \$200,000 decision. They are working on their own campaign to introduce **Eraserhead** and have their eyes on several more properties. An associate, Carm Bordonaro, heads up the distribution arm, called Creative Exposure.

The story of Tom Litvinskas and Jerry Szczur is an old-fashioned young-entrepreneurs-make-good story. It's a story we don't hear very often in Canada. These bright businessmen didn't attend any universities or film schools. In fact, Tom took a four-year commercial course instead of Ontario's usual five-year high school term.

"I thought four years was long enough to go to school," he said, laughing, "and I figured typing would be easy."

But all the reading and degrees in the world won't make a good businessman. The proof is in the doing. Tom and Jerry obviously have the initiative, the enterprise, and the common sense required to create a good business and keep it going. Their sense of humour makes the whole thing fun. Let's hope they continue to keep alive the tenuous tradition of the independent entrepreneur. □

CinéMag

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thumbs up -- and all is surfacing

by teri coburn

Although male support has been all-out for the filming of Margaret Atwood's best selling novel *Surfacing*, feminist producer Beryl Fox says: "The ones who really risked were women." Atwood turned down a better U.S. offer to give "a Canadian woman" a chance and her choice was Fox, a woman ready "to risk even failure to achieve a movie."

"There is an energy, a sense of something building in Canada; and a special sense of community in this film."

Beryl Fox, Producer



Kathleen Beller emerges from Mazinaw Lake as "Kate," a plucky survivor.

photo: Jack Rowand

Picture a very big man in a very brief swim suit emerging from a forest of Ontario pines with a Florida tan and a bush of sun-bleached hair, and you have ageless "Big John" McLaughlin, professional diver for over thirty-five years, underwater cinematographer and engineer, stuntman and — seven wives later — ladykiller. His first words to the female stranger in his midst (on location for a day and a half to cover the shooting of *Surfacing*), "We must stop meeting in the woods like this!" — an old line, but his irresistibly boyish grin could get away with.. almost anything.

But what's he doing on the edge of a forest beside Mazinaw Lake, six miles out of Cloyne, when he could be working on yet another James Bond film in the Bahamas, or deep-sea diving in a Navy salvage operation, or adjusting an oil rig in the Persian Gulf?

Flown in by the production for only two days, he's heading for the Mazinaw's sunken cave. It's eight feet high, ten feet wide, seven feet from end to end, fabricated out of styrofoam, fiberglass and six-hundred pounds of concrete. This Scenic Productions masterpiece, shipped in four pieces from Toronto to location for the filming of *Surfacing*, took five hours to sink. (A touch too much styrofoam, someone said.)

Because sinking a cave, and then filming what goes on inside it is a tricky business, *Surfacing* Film Production Inc. imported Big John's know-how. And does he know how! Having doubled for Richard Keele in the underwater shots of *The Spy Who Loved Me*, Big John boasts, "You know the guy who bit the shark? Well that was me!"

While Big John orchestrates the shoot by the lake, second assistant director, Don Brough shouts four miles away, "Clear the frame. Settle for shooting." There, at the second location's log cabin, part of the crew is filming Canadian actor, R.H. Thompson ("David") as he threatens to rape pretty Los Angeles actress, Kathleen Beller, as "Kate." ...All in a day's work.

Meanwhile, back at the beach, *Surfacing's* art director, Bill Beeton sits on a log in his faded blues, looking bemused as he watches the divers manoeuvre a huge white tarpaulin into the water. "It's to reflect the light off the cave floor and keep the silt down," he explains, clarifying that, "The problems of the set are essentially mechanical, not visual." When asked if he had been involved in the cave's installation he confesses, "I'm not really an underwater type. Everytime I go under my glasses get fogged up." As for the wilderness experience, "There are too many flies. And they all have teeth!" But Beeton has more important things to worry about, like whether or not to use real or plastic leeches for the cave's interior; and how to keep his bucket of crayfish and minnows alive for tomorrow's special effects. Of course, everyone is concerned about the clouds, because it is Thursday. If the sun doesn't shine for Friday's shoot, there is no waiting around. The cave will have to be moved to a swimming pool in Toronto, as the crew must quit their Mazinaw site on Saturday morning.

Jack-of-all-trades Beeton is also the fellow — culprit perhaps? — responsible for the petroglyph artwork on the steep cliffs bordering the lake. Recalling the Indian rock paintings in Margaret Atwood's best-selling novel, *Surfacing* (upon which the film is based), he grins. "I had to draw a moose... and a few other things." Elaborating

Having just returned from a year in Britain, Teri Coburn is a freelance writer who works out of Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto.



Joe Bottoms hiding behind a maple leaf

photo: Jack Rowand

on those "other things," Doug Tiller, property master, confides, "Some of those pictures would make Linda Lovelace choke!" (What? Porno petroglyphs?)

But Beeton's biggest baby is a specially fabricated dummy corpse. "Best I've ever seen," praises Big John. "And I've seen the real thing." Except that it is minus hands and toes: to preserve them, Beeton wrapped them in newspaper and put them in someone's cooler. When he went back to retrieve them for their reunion with the body, they were gone. Bon appetit! In their place, a package of garlic and bean-sprouts...

The dummy poses a further dilemma. Propped casually against a tree, observer Mike Lawson from Canadian Press dryly sums it up. "You can lead him to water but you can't make him sink." (Oh, for a film called *Submerging*.)

Seems both corpses are temperamental. Beeton still beefs about the dead heron. "It was only the size of a chicken. I thought it would look like a sparrow when we strung it up to the tree. And we had to keep stretching its wings because the muscles had set shut... I don't know how many close-ups they got of it. It was pretty foul!"

Foul or not, he was grateful for producer Beryl Fox's foresight when, discovering the corpse in her barn, she had the presence of mind to shove it in her freezer — in readiness... Two years later it surfaced none the worse for wear, but for a lick of ice cream on its wings.

As assistant to the producer Edie Yolles describes the moose-hunting scenes shot on a previous location in Northern

Quebec, one seriously wonders if Fox's description of *Surfacing* ("Basically a wilderness love story"), doesn't leave something out. According to Yolles, "Finding a moose is a big operation. And not everyone wants their moose tranquilized, if they only have one. Luckily there were a lot of them on the reservation," and the Indians co-operated.

Miraculously, the *Surfacing* cast and crew remain undaunted. Co-producer, Doug Leiterman believes that their survival experiences have actually united them. Take their white water trials for example. In one incident on location at the Palmer Rapids, Richard Leiterman, director of photography; Bob Morgan, canoe expert; and actress, Marg Dragu ("Anna") suffered an accident which might have been fatal. Leiterman describes it, modestly insisting that there were no heroics on his part, "merely a matter of calculation. Bob couldn't see past my camera and misjudged our entry into the rapids, so we tipped. I held onto the camera, but fifteen seconds more and I'd have had to let go." The outcome? He got some great shots of Dragu's face as they dumped. Enter King Baker, the other canoe expert to the rescue, just in time. Even the footage was saved. It was kept in the magazine, put into a pail of ice water from the rapids and shipped to Toronto pronto. (It's important to develop film while it's still wet.) The only thing lost was Twenty minutes of shooting time!

Not to be outdone, actor Joseph Bottoms ("Joe") declined the services of a stuntman during his take, in favor of pitching himself into the raging torrent, only to surface moments later, grinning and unscathed. Beller recalls her own frightening experience. "They needed a close-up of me in the rapids. Our canoe instructor taught us that the rapids would push us up then pull us under in a bouncing motion. Trouble was, the water level was low during our practice session. During the shooting it was much higher. The suction pulled me under and I didn't take a deep enough breath. I was only under a few seconds but it seemed like an eternity."

Meanwhile, Beeton noticed that one of the dixie cups used



Margret Dragu as "Anna":
black flies and cheese cake
photo: Jack Rowand



Claude Jutra (right) directs assistant
cameraman Jock Martin (left) and
DoP Richard Leiterman,
members of a "blue chip" crew
photo: Jack Rowand



Kathleen Beller and R.H. Thompson tense up before shooting the Palmer Rapids

photo: Jack Rowand

to mark a water site "had broken away and floated off to the other bank." He urged that it be retrieved because, "It's no good to have a dixie cup floating by in the wilderness. It screws up your special effects."

In an understatement, Richard Leiterman remarks, "This is a physically demanding film... And there is no time to spare.

We are doing an eight week shoot in five. Dolly tracks and cable runs are nothing in the city, but out here you're always crashing through bush and manoeuvring around boulders." Fortunately, due to the ingenuity of the ACME Grips even the worst terrain is eventually conquered. And much of the credit for remaining on schedule, and within the film's bud-

get, goes to Bob Linnell, production manager. Frequent location changes, bogged-down generator trucks, personal misfortunes facing cast and crew members are only a few of the headaches he weathers. And when the going gets really rough, he's hardly a stickler for protocol. Confides Doug Leiterman, "When one of the women complained about a problem with the toilet, it was Bob who cleared it up." Literally.

In listening to cast and crew alike, it becomes obvious that co-operation is the name of the game; that individual ego-needs are subservient to the pervasive team spirit. Beller, among others, emphasizes their sense of community, contrasting it to her experiences in Los Angeles where, "Actors are more segregated from the crew and unionism is more apparent."

"The crew is blue chip," says Fox. "The best I've ever worked with." Words echoed by Richard Leiterman, who hand-picked many of them himself and feels that the quality of their work has been universally inspiring. "The Americans are no longer afraid to come up here and use Canadian crews because they've been tested."

As *Surfacing* prepares for its final week of shooting in Toronto, an attractive, petite Beryl Fox sits at a table in the Mazinaw Inn, wearily reflecting on the costs of producing her first feature film. After mortgaging her house twice, working for three years without pay and investing all her savings in it, it is no wonder that there have been days when she has "prayed to be hit by a mac truck." Despite her fatigue and all the pressures, she grows increasingly animated as she talks. Obviously, she knows the ropes — has climbed most of them the hard way. But her enthusiasm and courage is infectious. It is suddenly easy to see how she convinced her final supporters — including Doug Leiterman, who admits he had doubts.

Although the male support followed, "the ones who really risked were the women," she qualifies: Women like Margaret Atwood, who chose to gamble so that her novel would be translated into film by a female Canadian producer. One quickly detects a special note in Fox's voice as she refers to her friendship with Atwood, remarking, "She's a very sophisticated lady, a lovely person. She realized changes would have to be made due to the commercial considerations of filmmaking." Her tone intimates her hopes that the film will justly represent Atwood's vision despite deviations in the script. Ultimately, her goal is that *Surfacing* will be "a film with layers," yet one that "appears enormously simple on the screen."

Adapting Atwood's complex novel wasn't easy. Four different scripts were rejected before Bernard Gordon came up with the fifth and final version. In struggling to align their separate visions, "Bernie and I had some terrible, terrible fights," Fox confesses. "But he's a real pro with a strong sense of justice. We both wanted to make it universally relevant... which required a re-thinking of the last ten years of feminism."

The outcome is a screenplay about explicit relationships, tested in the wilderness, as opposed to that of one woman's traumatic inner awakening. The ages of the protagonists have been lowered in an attempt to relate to today's youth. Fox stresses that the film is aimed at men as well as women, because "a woman is not free to love until she's free."

Of director, Claude Jutra, she is confident. "Claude is an actor's director, and he's working with some really splendid

actors. He is not always the easiest director, but they love him, turn themselves inside out for him." Directing his first English language theatrical feature film, *Jutra*, like Fox has had his "moments of exaltation and moments of 'Why the hell am I here?'" He admits that, at times, "I'd like to be making films in Quebec and be what I began as." But he thrives on forward motion too much to turn back. He does regret never being home long enough to fix up his new home in Montreal's Carre St. Louis.

"It's a pleasure to work with Claude," says *Surfacing's* editor, Toni Trow, who has worked with him before. "Some jobs are band-aid jobs. You're re-writing the script in the editing room. You seldom have to do that with Claude's films." Being with the crew on location at the Mazinaw Inn has been a treat for her. "I'll hate to leave here. It's been like summer camp."

With mixed feelings, proprietors of the Mazinaw Inn, Janet and Stan Withell, witness the crew's final day of activity. Stan has been occupied repairing the hot water tank that timed its explosion for two days before the crew's departure, leaving everyone without showers. Representing the general spirit of generosity so apparent at the Inn, Janet is anxious to give due credit to the unsung heroes of her staff — like Bertie, her staff co-ordinator. As for the unconventional nature of her guests, she admits that, at sixty-one years of age, it has been pretty demanding. At times, just feeding them all was chaotic at best. Then with a mischievous glint in her eye she confides, "I've never known who slept where, but twenty-one rooms were rented out for three weeks... Oh, but you can't print that!" No? "Well... sure you can print that."

Would she do it all again? After a pensive drag on her cigarette she suddenly leans forward, deadly serious, and wants this written down. "I've been here thirteen years and I've never washed a guest's socks. But I washed Claude's socks. I even Fleecied them because he's such a delightful man. In all sincerity, they're beautiful people. Some of the most gracious and kindly I've ever met." No doubt, the feeling is mutual. □

Surfacing's Cast and Crew

d. Claude Jutra, 1st asst. d. Rick Thompson, 2nd asst. d. Don Brough, 3rd asst. d. Rocco Gismondi, Keith Locke, sc. Bernard Gordon and based on the novel by Margaret Atwood, ph. Richard Leiterman, camera op. Nick Brook, canoe ex. Bob Morgan, King Baker, sp. ph. effects Arne Boye, underwater consult. "Big John" McLaughlin, 1st asst. camera Jock Martin, 2nd asst. camera Raul Randla, ed. Toni Myers, asst. ed. Catherine Leiterman, sd. mixer Christian Wangler, gaffer Malcolm Kendal, key grip Andy Mulkani, b.b. grip Robert McRae, b.b. electric Gary Deaneault, boom Randy Milligan, a.d. Bill Beeton, set doc. Bill Reid, continuity Pattie Robertson, props Doug Tiller, Stunt per. Gordy Huxtable, Catherine Leiterman, Bob Vince, Julia Leiterman, driver cap. Larry Sullivan, driver Gordy Huxtable, Bob Vince, craft serv. Julia Leiterman, cost. Ann-Marie Tree Newson, makeup Bill Morgan, gener. op. Herbert Geischl, l.p. Joseph Bottoms, Kathleen Beller, R.H. Thomson, Margaret Dragu, casting Claire Walker, Janine Manatis, assoc. p. Michael Zolf, exec. p. Bram Appel, Del Anderson, p. Beryl Fox, p.s. asst. Edie Yolles, co. p. Doug Leiterman, Philip F. Hobel, loc. manager Roberta Kip, publicity Edie Yolles, p. manager Robert Linnell, p. sect. Gabrielle Clery, p.c. Surfacing Film Productions, (year) 1979,

self-images: alberta's native peoples

by bernard dichek

Reaction is a weekly public affairs program, produced by the University of Calgary. Last December, it screened *Education for Native Peoples*, a film which captures the present Albertan experience. Bernard Dichek shares the experience of making the film...



These students of the Stoney People are developing language skills in both Stoney and English in a class taught by Rod Mark, the first Native person to teach at their Reserve.



Albert Lightning, an Elder of the Hobbema Indian Reserve, is interviewed

Albert Lightning is an Elder of the Hobbema Indian Reserve in Western Canada. His weathered skin and braided hair combine with the white, cowboy hat and thick-lens glasses that he wears to give the appearance of a man who is at home in two worlds. His manner of speaking in Cree is as loquacious, I am told, as his English. We wanted to film him telling a legend from Cree folklore as a demonstration of an innovative method his band is using to preserve their own language and oral traditions; through the use of videotape the band is recording as much of its ancient folklore as it possibly can.

As it is the usual procedure for an Elder to speak in Cree while another member of the band translates into English for the benefit of the younger generation who no longer know the language, we asked Albert to provide us with a sample story with young Bruce Cut Knife acting as translator. Our camera started rolling and at first things seemed to be going well. Albert would say a sentence in Cree and then Bruce would repeat it in English. But at one point Albert's vocabulary seemed to get the best of Bruce who looked quizzically at his Elder. Albert, in turn, tried to surreptitiously whisper the correct English word. All this with the camera still rolling of course.

I was not too concerned because I knew that if we wanted to keep things looking authentic we could later on edit out this segment. What began to really worry me though, was the fact that Albert was talking *about* legends — he wasn't actually *telling* one. At first I thought this was just an introduction but finding it indiscreet to interrupt, I waited as the introduction continued and continued. Later I was to find out that Plains Indians consider it bad luck to tell stories before "the snow flies." It was October and we were a few weeks too early. That oversight cost us a full magazine-load of film.

Our slip-up with Albert was not the first time during the production of the film **Education for Native Peoples** when we were confronted with the awkward difficulties involved with filming within a culture so different from our own.

At the very outset there was the problem of names. As the film was based on an idea provided by Native Students Services of the University of Calgary, the Reaction TV series producers chose to use the term "native peoples." However at the Hobbema Reserve in central Alberta, we found a preference for the word "Indian," while to the south in Lethbridge, "native American" was in common use. And then what to call ourselves? Personally, I found "white" or "anglo-saxon" or "European," inaccurate or discomforting while being called a "non-Indian" or "non-native" seemed to be avoiding the issue altogether.

Aside from these somewhat minor issues, which remain to be resolved, there was the far greater challenge of what approach to choose. "Don't show a lot of Indians who are failures and blame the white man for it," said Nancy Lewis, a student counselor who grew up on the Hobbema Reserve. That was the approach used by the CBC in a recent Quarterly Report on the state of the Canadian Indian. "Because people, including Indians themselves, need to be told that they can succeed and, in any case, it was a white person who helped me to get to where I am."



Children in a class at the Ermineskin Primary School participate in a "Special Person" lesson designed to improve their feelings of self-worth.

Nancy's view was shared by Terry Lusty, a Metis student at the University of Calgary. Lusty pointed out that in its own well-intentioned way, the media has often caused considerable harm to Indians and Metis by reinforcing negative self-images. Instead, Lusty and other people involved in Indian educational programs in Alberta expressed a need for more exposure to "success models" within Indian society.

A school lesson of this kind was in session the day we filmed at the Ermineskin Primary School which is attended by students from four different prairie bands. A different "Special Person" is chosen by the class every day. The teacher then designs an entire lesson around that "Special Person," and part of the lesson includes the rest of the children mentioning nice things that they know about that person.

While at the Morley Reserve Primary School, near the foothills of the Rockies, we met Rod Mark who returned to the Reserve after completing his university education in the city and became the first Indian to ever serve as a teacher on the Reserve. Rod uses his fluency in both Stoney and English to help develop his students' language skills and to ensure that they feel good about speaking in both languages.

At the university level, a similar attempt to instill positive attitudes could be observed in a developmental drama workshop taught by the University of Calgary Outreach program at Lesser Slave Lake. The course was aimed at developing the student's image of self-identity. One student, Archie Cunningham, recalled how the course helped him to change the way he had been conditioned to view himself. As a result, he found himself able to improve the way he related to other people.

At the University of Lethbridge, we found North American history being taught, perhaps for the first time, from the point of view of the North American Indian. "When the Indian won the battle it was known as a massacre," said Roy Cunningham, a member of the all-Indian teaching staff of the Native American Studies Program. "But when the white man won it was always called a victory."

The documentary film, like the Hollywood movie and the history textbook, has a significant role to play in the way that people view themselves and others. In dealing with the problems of Canada's Native Peoples, the televised exposé of disparity and inequality serves an obvious and much-needed purpose. However, as we found in producing **Education for Native Peoples**, the impact of the program on the very people concerned must be given careful consideration. □

Bernard Dichek is the Development Officer with the Department of Communications Media, University of Calgary.

turning pumpkins into cinderellas

(or vice versa)

by lois siegel

Film students aspiring to go professional take note: "After graduation, a student who has produced a good film will be eligible for grants." Lois Siegel reports.



For practical experience you can't beat a Larry Kent feature where everyone assists in creating special effects — Richard Tasse, editor; Ross McAuley, sound; Larry Kent, director; Jorge Ruiz, asst. camera; Tim Lawrence, camera

photo: Lois Siegel

Filmmaking, like politics, is a contact sport. It's not always what you know, but it is most definitely who you know.
Anonymous

As a film student, one has certain advantages. Equipment is readily available, supplied by the school without cost. Budgets are fairly low, therefore financial risk is limited. Crew members work for free. Deadlines for projects are rather flexible. The student can concentrate on the artistic qualities of his film instead of having to worry about all the business hassles of filmmaking in the real world: accountants, insurance, lawyers, producers, rights for literary works and music...

If a film goes over budget, if one is lucky, mom or dad will chip in an extra \$100 for lab fees or an extra 400' of film. One smart kid had his father play the main role in his western which became a very sound investment in more ways than one.

But the "pleasures" of school are only realized after a few years on the "outside." The transition can be rather painful if one doesn't think ahead. No matter what aspect of filmmaking one decides to pursue, it is important that a student or young filmmaker have examples of his work to show to a prospective producer, distributor or financier. No one in their right mind is going to give a kid \$60,000 to make a half hour film on an idea alone.

The student in a relatively leisurely 3-4 year program should be able to produce several projects showing his capabilities during that period of time.

First year students are not included. All it takes is a little ingenuity. For example, many small companies or schools would be happy to financially support a super 8 project advertising either a company's product or a school's new technological program to show to prospective clients or students. Health associations have been known to back short 16mm documentaries that have eventually been sold to television. One company sponsored a student commercial and paid for the film and added \$2,000 for the filmmakers' efforts. Unfortunately, the filmmakers were unaware of the fact that they had

to pay royalties for music lifted directly from a record and spent their \$2,000 to obtain music rights.

After graduation, a student who has produced a good film will be eligible for grants.

Production

The Canada Council, for instance, stipulates in their Application for Film Grants that the filmmaker should have directed at least one film or have established a professional reputation in the visual arts. The Film Grant covers production costs up to \$25,000. It is rarely advisable for a beginning filmmaker to ask for this amount. Don't be too greedy your first try. Application deadlines occur four times a year: March 15, June 15, September 15 and December 15. Announcements of grants are three months later. But applications for \$10,000 or less are adjudicated within 6-8 weeks.

Project Cost Grants include script development and writing, research and advanced studies. The grant does not cover film production costs. The maximum grant is \$2,400.

The brochure Aid to Artists and application forms are available from the following address: The Canada Council, Arts Division, Box 1047, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5V8 (613) 237-3400.

Other resources are the various provincial councils or institutes.

The Ontario Arts Council has an elaborate program to aid artists. It offers special assistance in the areas of film, photography, video and screenwriting.

Film grants are available in two categories: **junior**: for short films (less than 20 minutes) of an experimental or self-expressive nature; up to \$7,000 to initiate such a film or up to \$3,500 to complete and **senior**: for dramatic films or docu/dramas (over 20 minutes) which are scripted and employ actors; up to \$20,000 to initiate or up to \$10,000 to complete.

Deadlines occur twice a year: February 1 and August 15; and once a year for the scriptwriting competition, December 1.

Write: Ontario Arts Council, 151 Bloor St. W, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1T6 (416) 961-1660.

The Manitoba Arts Council also offers grants to artists. A Major Arts

Grant totals \$7,000 and is awarded to professional creative and performing artists in all disciplines showing exceptional quality or accomplishment who wish to concentrate solely on their art for a period of time to carry out a well-defined program.

A Visual Arts Grant of \$2,000 is awarded to professional visual artists.

The Project Grant which provides for a part of the actual costs to the artist on a specific project awards a maximum of \$1,500 in film.

Address: Manitoba Arts Council, Centennial Concert Hall, 123-555 Main St., Winnipeg, Manitoba (204) 944-2237.

The Nova Scotia Department of Recreation, visual arts officer, Cultural Affairs Division, Tom Taylor reports the following:

"Most of our grants are directed towards developmental projects for groups and individuals, and applications are made to a Grant Review Committee and based on a provincial priority." The program includes assistance for co-sponsored (visual arts) projects (maximum assistance negotiable), Assistance



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Lois Siegel writes, photographs, teaches and makes experimental films in Montreal.



A student success story: Glen MacPherson went on from Algonquin College to find steady work as an assistant cameraman
photo: Robert Brown

to Travel for Market (art) purposes (maximum \$350. per project) and Assistance for Miscellaneous Proposals in the Visual Arts (funds negotiable).

"The major film organization in Nova Scotia is The Atlantic Film Co-op, 1671 Argyle Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3J 2B5. This organization has an extensive program for art education through filmmaking and is funded through the provincial government, this office and the Canada Council."

Address: The Nova Scotia Department of Recreation, P.O. Box 864, Bank of Montreal Tower, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2V2 (902) 424-7512.

The Government of the Province of Newfoundland: The Arts and Cultural Centre, P.O. Box 1854, St. Johns, Newfoundland, A1C 5P9, (709) 737 3650, offers a small Grants and Awards program available through their Cultural Affairs Division.

No grants are made presently to individuals. Director of Cultural Affairs, John C. Perlin wrote the following: "I believe the (Grants and Awards) committee has received an application recently from a filmmaker for a specific project that was approved subject to the other funding that he applied for being available. Apart from this, assistance was made available to two filmmakers to attend a National Film Board workshop several

years ago in Nova Scotia... The Grants and Awards program, therefore, is open for submissions from filmmakers on a project basis subject, of course, to the Committee's having the funds and approving individual projects.

The Province of British Columbia Cultural Services Branch in Victoria has no official policies for assistance to filmmakers, other than tuition scholarships for serious students of filmmaking and an operations grant to the Pacific Cinémathèque Pacifique Society for film distribution in B.C., according to C.M. Thomas, administrator, Grant Funds.

Letters were written to the other provinces not listed. No reply was received, but the Canadian Film Institute Yearbook of Canadian Cinema 1977-78 does provide a list of federal agencies, associations, unions and guilds. Address: Canadian Film Institute, 75 Albert Street, Suite 1105, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5E7 (613) 238-6748.

In Quebec there is the **L'Institut Québécois du Cinema**, 306 Place D'Youville, Montreal, H2Y 2B6, (514) 844-1954. The Institute works through investments and loans. It will provide up to 60 percent of the total film budget, if you can prove that you can supply the other 40 percent. The intention is to eventually recuperate the investment and share the profits of the films it supports according to the pro-

portion of the investment. For loans reimbursement is arranged with the producer, including interest. It works on the same basis as a financial institution. The Institute has contributed to 271 projects in less than two years.

Ministère des Affaires Culturelles du Québec: Grants, not for production, but for research and scriptwriting are available.

Write to: Aides Aux Artistes, Ministère des Affaires Culturelles, 955, chemin Saint-Louis, Québec. G1S 1C8.

Distribution:

If your film is very good, you may try CBC or a commercial distributor, but a distributor who wants to make money with your film will require professional quality and subject matter that sells. Most distributors will tell you entertainment sells, culture does not. They say only 30 percent of their audience is interested in the arts: music, dance, painting. The films that sell deal with the following: animals, children, sports and safety. They are definitely not interested in experimental films, but animation is fine. It is a good idea for every young filmmaker to talk to a distributor. Sometimes it's best to shatter a few illusions in the early stages of one's career.

But young filmmakers are welcome at several independent distribution centers, and the great advantage is that here the filmmaker retains all rights to his film.

COOPERATIVE CINEASTES INDEPENDANTS, 3682 St. Laurent, Montreal, programs films for the Cinema Parallel as well as for foreign festivals and schools.

CANADIAN FILMMAKERS DISTRIBUTION CENTER, 144 Front St. West, Suite 430, Toronto, Ontario, M5J 1G2 rents and sells films throughout Canada and is also establishing ties with the United States.

Contacts:

Since filmmaking is an art which almost always involves working with others, it is very important that one gets to know a variety of people and that one can easily get along with other individuals. A film director who merely 'uses' his 'friends' to his own advantage is soon labeled and people will become hesitant to work with that person. Reputations spread fast, both good and bad.

It is important to realize that not everyone is qualified to be a director or cameraman. There are other jobs available, and it is quite advisable that students grab the first opportunity they have to join a professional production. Practical experience is invaluable. The first thing any director will ask a prospective crew member is: "What have you done?" No one is going to walk onto a professional crew as an assistant cameraman without experience. Some unions require 100 days apprenticeship for any given position, and then they often require a written and oral examination before one becomes an official member. It may take 4-5 years for a 2nd assistant cameraman to become a 1st assistant in the IATSE union in Toronto.

But there are always low budget, non-union productions being shot. In the beginning, experience is much more important than money, therefore it is very wise for a young film aspirant to offer his services free of charge just for the chance to observe what happens during a production. Any intelligent young filmmaker can learn five times what he can learn sitting in a classroom just by keeping his eyes open and,

during actual shooting, his mouth shut. When crew members are taking a break, they will usually be more than happy to answer your questions, but don't bother someone while he is concentrating on his work. In this fashion one begins to meet other filmmakers, finds out what productions are coming up and discovers where filmmakers and actors hang out — what their favorite bars are — where they go to relax.

If one wants to succeed, one has to be persistent, with a dash of politeness and humbleness thrown in.

There is the story of the kid looking for work who used to sit and read a book on the floor in the hallway in the middle of English Production at The National Film Board. One day a film director came by and tripped over the young filmmaker and said, "Oh, I was just thinking of you. There is a Mexican crew arriving in a day. They need a production manager. Would you like the job...?"

A Final Note: When you finally do become professional, do not forget that you were a young filmmaker once. When a young person approaches you for a job, give him a chance too. □

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Serge Bouharevich (right) enjoying one of the advantages of student life — readily available equipment

photo: Lois Siegel

INTRODUCING...

Kit Hood and Linda Schuyler



Linda Schuyler and Kit Hood: "A meeting of form and content" with the Spencer the Cat as Muse.

photo: Bill Dunn

There's an eccentric old building, part house, part storefront, sitting all by itself on Queen Street East in Toronto. For years it was known as the Ferron Real Estate office and I know people who would bike for miles just to see the gigantic Boston fern that filled its front window. Then one day, several months ago, the fern disappeared. A new sign went up outside the door — *Playing With Time Inc.* It's not a name the average passer-by might associate right away with a film production company. But it's the name of the first film, and most epic project to date, of a two-and-a-half-year partnership between Kit Hood and Linda Schuyler. Somehow it seemed fitting to keep the name and

the film's piano-clock logo for the ongoing company. It also serves as a reminder of the surreal possibilities inherent in the film medium.

Jimmy: *Playing With Time* is an hour-long study of a 73-year-old marathon piano player and his gruelling attempt to better his own world record by playing non-stop for 117 hours at the Canadian National Exhibition. The film has been sold to CBC and is now making the rounds in world television markets and in the education circuit at home. Hood and Schuyler (pronounced Skyler) are handling their own distribution — a strategy they feel is important both for their long term financial success and for the immediate results of audience feedback.

"We've made mistakes and we still have a lot to learn," says Schuyler. "For instance, on the CBC deal we were so excited to make the sale and get the money (\$8,500) that we didn't pay much attention to the terms. Now we are locked into two showings over three years. Another time, we might try for just a one-time contract so we would have the option of re-selling it the next year, instead of having to wait three years."

"We tend to think we are not doing very well," says Hood modestly of their self-distribution system, "until we talk to other people and discover their surprise that we've sold 14 prints of a film called *Cultural Fabric* since November. And that's only in Ontario."

Playing With Time's sales efforts so far have been directed primarily at the school and library market. A mailing is prepared for each new film and if the buyers are interested, they are sent a preview print. Each print is accompanied by an evaluation form.

"The evaluations are very rewarding," says Hood. "We've shed many a tear over some of them, but it's a good way of keeping in touch with what our market wants."

The company's initial sales drive has been in Ontario, but they are beginning to expand their library mailings outside the province. It's a full-time job and Amy Cooper has been hired to handle that end of the business. Hood and Schuyler are also talking to the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre for additional marketing help.

"An established distributor either wants all or nothing," explains Hood. "Whereas the Distribution Centre will take some things and we can still handle some films directly ourselves."

Hood and Schuyler have come to this partnership from quite different backgrounds. Hood, 36, started as a film editor in his native England and was working with Walt Disney Productions in London before coming to Canada in 1969. Since then he has worked extensively in advertising circles, editing commercials for companies like Rabko, Montage, Cinegraph and Projections.

Schuyler, 30 was teaching a media course to grade eight students and using available equipment to make some films of her own. One of her films, *Between Two Worlds*, created quite a stir when sections were aired out of context on NBC to support a story on race problems in Toronto. Success didn't follow success, however. Her next venture was, in her own words, "a disaster." She sought the aid of an experienced editor to try to save the muddled footage. The film never did materialize, but a partnership did.

"We look at it as a meeting of form and content," says Hood. "I had lots of technique from 15 years cutting commercials, but I felt I lacked con-

tent. Linda had lots of good ideas for films, but her technical skills left a bit to be desired."

Their first major project together was *Jimmy: Playing With Time*. Originally they planned to make a three-minute filler for CBC on this curious old man who spent his life travelling from one seedy arena to another playing marathon piano, but the more they pursued it the deeper involved they got. With \$7,000 of Canada Council money they began operating as Jimmy's agents and set up a forum at the Canadian National Exhibition. Mark Irwin spent three days shooting the event and Hood spent several months editing the marathon footage to 90 minutes, meshing the three different levels of time which operate in the film. Before the CBC sale was made another half-hour was taken out. The two-and-a-half year evolution of the film became the evolution of the company. For awhile ends were met by teaching jobs and commercial editing assignments, but now Hood and Schuyler have enough film projects in progress, aided by the cash flow of grants and an NFB contract, that they can be full-time producers of their own ideas.

Our Cultural Fabric, a half-hour program showing how clothes influence our ideas about different cultures, has been sold and aired on Global TV. The film was made with the help

of the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews and is the first of a projected series on multiculturalism. A child's film, *Ida Makes A Movie*, has \$7,000 from the Ontario Arts Council and a pre-sale to CBC's children's department. They hope to start filming in June. The NFB contract is for *Mirror Mirror*, an \$85,000 half-hour on the 100-year history of advertising in Canada. That's slated for an August shoot.

And, of course, there's The Feature "Don't we all have plans for a feature somewhere down the road?" laughs Hood. Theirs is a modern-day musical version of Joan of Arc with music and lyrics by the father and son team, Archie and Lewis Mannie.

When you first walk into 935 Queen Street East you step back in time, imagining the real estate deals that must have been made here during two generations of the family-run business. Everything is still intact after 97 years. The dark wood bannister rail which marks the office from the waiting area is still in glowing condition and the pressed tin ceiling has been changed only by a coat of white paint. But the posters on the wall and the editing and screening facilities hidden beyond the next door, tell of a different stock in trade. Imagine a stately old Victorian dame like that starting a new life in the nefarious business of film.

Linda West

Eda Lishman

Of the current crop of emerging Alberta film producers, Eda Lishman must be one of the most strong-minded. Her unflinchingly objective appraisals of herself and her work have kept her independent production company, The Producers, in business for the last eight years, largely through production-type short films. At the rate she works, she could easily keep going for another eighty.

Sharing the dream of many an as-

piring producer, however, Eda's goal is to work on features — only features. This is why she is now turning down a major job on an average of one every three weeks. "There comes a point when you just have to stop doing the bread-and-butter thing that's going to pay for what you really want to do and start *doing* what you really want to do," she emphatically explains. "You have to say, 'No, I don't do this type of thing: I do *this* type of thing.' Otherwise you'll just wind up doing the shit

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Alberta film producer Eda Lishman: "I've never been out of work."

work forever." It's a brave step, away from security and into the unknown. But Eda has ventured into the unknown before and found that it's not that scary.

As a teenager, after winning several provincial drama awards, Eda ran away from the very small Alberta town of Vulcan and headed straight for the big city — Toronto. She wound up acting in two productions and directing a play right off. She then landed a job at Calgary's Mac Theatre as Assistant Director. After attending the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology in Radio and Television Arts, Eda became a production assistant at MEETA, then a commercial producer at CBXT-TV. She travelled on to Vancouver, where she produced for the CTV network.

All these experiences reinforced her firm belief that work is available if you want it: "I've never been out of work. Conditions aren't always perfect, but you fit yourself to the conditions. You can't just dream about the perfect job. People who say, 'Oh, I'm too laid-back to hustle for this or that,' I don't understand that attitude. To me, 'laid-back' is the worst thing you can say about someone." Then, "What does it mean, anyway?"

muses the young woman who has taken exactly two holidays in the last fifteen years — and one of those was really a professional excursion to the Cannes Film Festival, a turning point in her career. "I needed to see the seedy side of the business — the hype, the bullshit, the worst aspect of things. I did; it was there. But it also convinced me that film is the one thing I've got to do." It was after the Cannes experience that Eda made her decision to accept only feature film work.

Eda has learned not to be afraid

of risks. "When I was growing up, I was told, 'Be a good girl and work hard and follow the rules, and you will be rich some day.' Of course that's not true. The people who are rich are the very ones who break the rules." And so she has ventured into a profession where there are few females in top positions: "assistant producers, yes. Producers, no," she states. But she is bolstered by her basic optimism and faith in human nature. "I take people at face value. Even if I'm knifed in the back, I don't let it affect me." Knifed in the back? "Oh, sure. Once I had a secretary hiding important telexes on me for 4 months. I wound up looking like an idiot. Why? She couldn't get used to having a woman as her 'superior.'" The whole woman thing does enter into the picture according to Eda. "Women, because of their programming, can't believe they can really be successful. For years, I would do something really well but think it was just luck: something I'd gotten away with and would eventually be found out for the fraud I was. When I wrote and produced a sponsored film, *The Grand Opening*, it won five awards at the 1977 Alberta Motion Picture Industries Association (AMPIA) presentations, including Best Film, out of 75 entries. My reaction? I wanted to hide. I didn't even want to talk about it. I thought it was a fluke, an accident, and I was ashamed of fooling everyone. That company then made a \$2.7 million deal because of my film. I finally started to understand that I had won because I really was good."

Eda is currently working on three projects, two in Edmonton and one in Vancouver. She is surveying scripts both for herself and for other producers. She is also one of the directors of AMPIA and volunteers as editor of the bimonthly AMPIA newsletter, *Film-biz*.

Martha Jones □

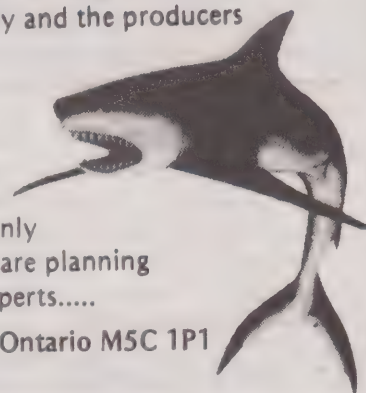
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BOOKSHELF

by george l. george

Recent French Books

A well conceived and extensively documented survey by Luda and Jean Schnitzer, *Histoire du cinéma Soviétique 1919-1940* considers development and motivations as reflections of the Soviet concept of "the socialist man." Interviews with filmmakers, assessment of trends, historic and social considerations, rare stills, all give exceptional value to the book (Ed. Pygmalion/Gerard Walter, Paris, F89).

In *Le Western*, Christian Gonzalez appraises the genre mainly as entertainment, but also as the chronicle of a legend, and a fitting mirror to a colorful era of territorial expansion. The particular styles of John Ford, Henry King, Sam Peckinpah, Sergio Leone and directors of "spaghetti" westerns are discussed (PUF, Paris, F10).

The script of Hans Jürgen Seyberberg, *Hitler, un film d'Allemagne*, is a panoramic indictment of the Nazi regime, a fantastic visualization combining historic reconstructions, individual destinies and allegoric tableaux in a nightmarish montage of terrifying reality and taunting kitsch (Seghers/Laffont, Paris, F15).

In *Cinéma et condition humaine*, Michel Estève raises questions of man's confrontation with history and fate, as pictured in current films. Their fusing of form and content, their social and personal dimensions and their esthetic structures are the dominating element of their contemporaneity (Albatros, Paris F44).

A theoretical speculation on the nature and effect of comic film, Jean-Paul Simon's *Le Filmique et le Comique* uses semiology and psychoanalysis to determine the status of film comedy as a "cinematographic discourse" bridging the film itself, its creators and the audience (Albatros, Paris, F44).

Marcel L'Herbier, whose films led the renaissance of French cinema in the years following World War I, retraces his prodigious career in *La tête qui tourne*, a challenging and poignant memoir of a life devoted to the art of "man's new age." Now 89, L'Herbier has retained the passion, the in-

telligence and the sensitivity that marked his film work (Belfond, Paris, F59).

The spoken dialogue of Josée Dahan's film, *Simone de Beauvoir*, reproduces conversations that the novelist/philosopher had in Paris with Jean-Paul Sartre and various friends. Humorous or sober-minded, the interchanges are spontaneous and revealing, as they deal with private, literary or political activities of a remarkable woman (gallimard, Paris, F25).

In *Marguerite Duras*, the filmmaker's work is dissected by Duras herself and her entourage, searching for the meaning behind the meaning in a fascinating process of analytical hide-and-seek and critical probing (Albatros, Paris, F38).

Popular French actor Paul Meurisse completed *Les éperons de la liberté* shortly before his untimely death last year. His memoirs evoke pre-war Paris where he made his reputation singing in café-concerts before leading in films directed by Jean Renoir, Marcel Carné, Jacques Feyder and Henri-Georges Clouzot (Laffont, Paris, F45).

A blueprint for the film of the future is proposed by Guy Hennebelle and his CinemAction team in the French monthly, *Exran* (No. 80). Dubbed "cin-ema d'intervention," it calls for a closer integration of film with contemporary reality, and suggests areas of research in political, popular, experimental, regional and other type motifs that would reflect today's life and aspirations. By the way, *Ecran* is a remarkable magazine, informative and expertly critical, that offers a comprehensive coverage of cinema in France and elsewhere.

An extensive study of the silent Italian cinema is featured in *Les cahiers de la Cinémathèque* (No. 26-27), a quarterly published by the Cinémathèque de Toulouse. This survey encompasses the film history of the period, the filmmakers, their films and their esthetic approach, in an authoritative round-up of a uniquely productive 30-year span.

From G.K. Hall & Co., three guides to references and resources are added to their valuable series: *Charlie Chaplin* by Timothy J. Lyons (\$30), *Akira Kurosawa* by Patricia Erens (\$15) and *Lindsay Anderson* by Charles L.P. Silet (\$18). Each volume, infor-

mative, scholarly and insightful, includes a biography, a critical survey of achievements, a list of films with synopses, credits and notes, an annotated guide to articles, and other appropriate data.

In *Movie Brats*, Michael Pye and Linda Myles examine the effect on the content and form of current movies by the new generation of filmmakers. Coppola, Scorsese, Spielberg, Lucas, Milius and DePalma are the innovators credited with re-orienting the industry to attract a different, younger audience (Holt Rinehart Winston \$12.95/5.95).

Dealing with an industry little known outside Europe and largely identified with Joris Ivens, John Ferno and Bert Haanstra, *Dutch Cinema* by Peter Cowie presents a number of gifted directors from the Netherlands. Their background and goals are perceptively described, and their films knowledgeably analyzed in this informative, illustrated survey (Barnes \$12).

Editor Dennis La Beau has assembled, in *Theatre, Film and Television Biographies Master Index* a comprehensive listing of some 100,000 names of personalities whose full biographies appear in 44 source books referenced in this useful volume (Gale \$35). □

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Academy Award winning George L. George is a film director who does film book reviews in Canada, France and the U.S.

TECH NEWS

Editing Alternatives

no. 5 in a series of 10

by rodger j. ross

5. EDITING ALTERNATIVES

When a film program is being put together (assembled) on videotape, the work can be organized in several different ways. The easiest and most direct method for filmmakers is to prepare a workprint in the usual way, cut and splice (conform) the original film footage to match the workprint, and then transfer the complete edited film to videotape. In some situations it may be necessary to add or insert some extra program segments such as titles and credits after the transfer to tape has been made. This can be done easily by electronically editing picture or sound, or both, to finish the program assembly.

With this method all — or almost all — the work of program preparation can be done in the film editing stage, utilizing simple, inexpensive film equipment. The workprint can be screened in a film projector as often as necessary, and revised in any desired manner before the original film footage is cut and spliced and transferred to tape. The final program assembly operations usually require only a minimum amount of time on costly and complicated electronic equipment.

Program Assembly by Electronic Editing

Program producers with television background and experience may prefer to use an entirely different assembly method — they may want to transfer all — or selected portions — of the unedited original film footage to videotape as the first step; electronic editing facilities can then be utilized to put the program together. This procedure is comparable with television program

production on videotape from one or more electronic cameras making the original recordings scene by scene.

A great deal of highly sophisticated electronic equipment has been developed to enable programs to be produced in this manner. The simplest and most direct method for assembling a program is to make use of two videotape recorders, one in the record and the other in the playback mode, dubbing the pre-recorded program segments scene by scene onto a master program tape.

At the start of an assembly operation the first scene is located in the roll of pre-recorded material, and the desired portion of this scene is dubbed onto the master. Then, after the second scene has been located on the playback machine, the start of that scene is electronically edited onto the end of the first scene. This procedure has to be repeated many times to make up a complete program, tying up a great deal of costly electronic equipment for many hours.

Usually, professional quadraplex videotape recorders using 2" wide magnetic tape are used to make the original recordings and the master program tape.

A much more flexible variation of the above assembly method is to make up the electronic equivalent of a film blueprint by making dubs of the original 2" quadraplex recordings on lower cost, portable helical scan equipment, in a procedure known as "off-line" editing. After all of the editing decisions have been made, the original 2" quadraplex recordings are assembled on a master program tape to match scene by scene the edited video "workprint." This is usually done automatically with computerized facilities, utilizing the SMPTE time and control code recorded in the cue track of the videotape to identify individual scenes and video frames.

Practical Program Assembly Considerations

Anyone working with modern electronic post-production equipment will

encounter a great variety of different kinds of editing and assembly facilities, from elementary to highly sophisticated professional. In many situations only semi-professional helical scan recorders may be available for making the original recordings and the final program assemblies. While it is quite possible to produce excellent results with these much less costly facilities, picture quality is not likely to compare favorably with work done on professional 2" tape, especially if the pictures on the edited program tape are several generations removed from the original recordings. Besides, editing capabilities with less costly helical scan equipment are inevitably more limited.

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Long time Supervisor of Technical Film Operations at the programming centre of the CBC, Mr. Ross is the author of two books, Television Film Engineering and Color Film for Color Television, has won the Agfa-Gevaert Gold Medal awarded by the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers, and is presently Chairman of the SMPTE Board of Editors.

There is a parallel here with film production on 16 or 8mm film. It is well known that excellent results can be achieved with these smaller formats; in fact, 16mm film is now considered a professional format, and is used successfully in many commercial and industrial applications. But for large screen theatrical projection 35mm comes out away ahead.

So, in producing programs on videotape, one should consider carefully, first of all, the end use, as well as the degree of complexity likely to be encountered before undertaking a program assembly operation. As a rule, videotape facilities are in great demand, and heavily booked, with the result that pressure to complete an assembly operation within the scheduled time period can become quite severe, especially when unexpected complications develop.

Fades, Dissolves and Superimpositions

Whatever method is employed in the preparation of the original film materials and in the assembly of a program on videotape, some provision must be made for adding effects such as fades, dissolves and supers (titles, credits, etc.). In the production of programs on videotape with electronic cameras, a common practice is to separate the various scenes and program segments on two or more reels of tape, either by cutting and splicing the original recordings, or by a re-recording (dubbing) operation. This gives the approximate equivalent of the familiar A&B rolls for film printing. These separate videotape reels are then played back through a video switcher-mixer to add the effects electronically, while the combined output of the switcher-mixer is recorded on the program master tape. The ease with which a wide range of effects can be produced in this manner is one of the greatest advantages of program assembly on videotape.

The method employed to add effects electronically can be illustrated by a simple A&B reel operation. Let us say that the finished program must have several fades and dissolves between some of the scenes. The A&B reels are made up with the A reel containing outgoing scenes and the B reel the incoming scenes. Three videotape machines are needed, two in the playback mode, feeding video from the A and B reels into two inputs at the switcher-mixer, and the third machine in the record mode, to make a recording of the switcher-mixer output.

The pictures from the A and B reels appear on two side-by-side picture monitors in front of the switcher-mixer console. To produce a fade, the mixer lever for the A reel input is moved slowly from the full-on to the full-off position as the end of the first scene approaches, reducing the video level to a minimum. Then, at the start of the next scene in the B reel the lever for the B reel input is moved from the off to the full-on position. For a dissolve the two fader levers are tied together, and as they are moved slowly from one end of their travel to the other the video level from the A reel scene is reduced, while at the same time the video from the B reel scene is increased to normal level. These program segments containing the effects can then be electronically edited into the master program tape.

Automatic videotape editing and assembly systems are now available capable of controlling up to eight playback machines, plus three external sources, such as switchers and faders, and one record machine, by means of keyboard data entry.

Lettering or numbers can be superimposed over a picture by an electronic technique known as keyed insertion, by dropping the characters into "holes" in the picture video. Another widely used technique for titling employs an electronic character generator.

Assembling a Film Program in A&B Rolls

These program assembly methods can be used successfully also when the original videotape recordings consist of transfers from film. However, a great deal of time taken up in making editing decisions on scarce, costly and complicated electronic equipment can be saved and put to much better use by performing as much as possible of the editing on the film before the transfers to tape are made. Making up a film workprint can save hours — even days in some complicated situations — that would otherwise be needed to complete the program assembly by videotape editing. This method has, of course, the additional advantage that film editing provides infinitely more scope for creative decision making. Instead of being tied to a complex machine system, the film editor and program producer can work at a much more leisurely pace, on simple film equipment, to achieve the desired production values.

The most obvious course to take is to cut and splice the original film footage into A&B rolls in the same way as 16mm originals are so often prepared

for printing. Then the A&B rolls could be placed on projectors on two telecine chains to give two separate video inputs at the video switcher-mixer, in the same way as A and B videotape reels are handled.

But in attempting to use this method of film program assembly it will be found that telecine film projectors have not been designed for synchronous starting and running, so that it would be next to impossible to cut back and forth between scenes in the A&B rolls with frame accuracy. In any event the video operator at the switcher-mixer console cannot take the kind of instantaneous action that frame accuracy demands. These problems can be avoided by leaving as much picture footage as possible ahead of and at the end of each scene in the A and B rolls.

However, when transfers to videotape are being made from original film camera footage, adjustments of telecine camera controls — sometimes quite large — are always needed to correct for density and color variations in the pictures. The video operator at the telecine control console needs some time at the start of each scene to decide what corrections are needed and then to make the adjustments of the appropriate controls. With the intermittent film advance in projectors normally utilized in camera-type telecines it is quite difficult to stop, rewind and start the film when the video operator misjudges the corrections needed for a scene.

Equipment is now becoming available that will make this method of film program assembly much easier and more precise. RCA's new FR35 and 16 projectors can be locked to television sync for synchronized starting and running, and projector speed can be varied from 48 fps down to still frame. A system for storing picture corrections in a memory is also available, enabling the video operator and client or program producer to obtain just the right colors and picture balance.

The Rank Cintel flying spot scanner now in use in a number of Canadian post-production houses offers many advantages for this kind of work also, not the least of which is a continuous film transport. Scene by scene corrections can be made with accessory equipment known as "Topsy" and stored in a memory for subsequent automatic transfer to videotape. With the rapid advances now taking place in television technology, film is becoming much more attractive as the original recording medium for programs on videotape. □

FILM REVIEWS

David Cronenberg's Fast Company

d. David Cronenberg, 1st asst. d. James Kaufman, 2nd asst. d. Jim Long, sc. Phil Savath, Courtney Smith, David Cronenberg, original story Alan Treen, dial. & effects ed. Terry Burge, ph. Mark Irwin, 1st asst. camera Robin Miller, 2nd asst. camera Gary Armstrong, sp. effects Tom Fisher, ed. Ron Sanders, asst. ed. Arnie Stewart, racing ed. Bruce Carwardine, stunts Phil Adams, Mark Damien, asst. sd. ed. David Street, Arnie Stewart, Christopher Tate, sd. rec. Bryan Day, sd. re-rec. Terence Cooke, a.d. Carol Spier, boom Ken Pappes, crew Peter Von King, John Thomas, continuity Margaret Hanly, cost. Delphine White, properties Peter Lauterman, asst. props. Dave McAree, l.p. William Smith, John Saxon, Claudia Jennings, Nicholas Campbell, Don Francks, Cedric Smith, Judy Foster, George Buza, Robert Haley, David Petersen, exec. p. David M. Perlmutter, p. Michael Lebowitz, Peter O'Brian, Courtney Smith, p. manager Caryl Brandt, p. co-od. Sherry Cohen, p. sect. Linda Farmer, Linda Brestich, p.c. Michael Lebowitz Inc. (1979) col. 35mm, running time 93 minutes.

Fast Company is a film about drag-racing (shot in Alberta and the north-west U.S.) that's already been and gone through the drive-in and rural theatre circuits; perhaps under ordinary circumstances one wouldn't even notice it. But there's one circumstance about the film that isn't ordinary: it was directed by a man who is arguably the best filmmaker in English Canada today — David Cronenberg.

In the eyes of commentators anxious about the cultural respectability of Canadian cinema, Cronenberg is more an embarrassment than an asset to this country. As a maker of sleazy horror movies for the exploitation market (and, what's worse, movies that have consistently made money both here and abroad at a time when Canadian films are an iffy commercial proposition), he's often an object of the deepest suspicion for content-oriented critics. But *Shivers*, *Rabid* and *The Brood*, sensational horror films with a cool visual style and a melancholy, sometimes ironic, detachment, can all, in my opinion, take a confident place amongst the small handful of English-language movies that are both genuinely good and



Claudia Jennings as Sammy and William Smith as Lonnie Johnson star in *Fast Company*
photo: Warren Lipton

genuinely Canadian.

Cronenberg has always liked to build his projects from the ground up, conceiving and writing his films as well as directing them. Indeed, he's gone on record as saying that the most important ingredient of a movie is a good script — a surprising remark from someone who has the priceless gift of a controlled and incisive visual style. But one can see what he's getting at after looking at **Fast Company**, a film that he was brought into at the later stages to direct. Although Cronenberg receives a credit for the script (along with Phil Savath and Courtney Smith), **Fast Company** is all too clearly somebody else's basic idea. The scenario, which features a sympathetic group of racing-car drivers and mechanics and their girlfriends pitted against the evil machinations of their corrupt corporate boss, is a witless collection of stale conventions. The characters exist only in the most stereotyped forms, and the action is motivated almost exclusively by the need to keep producing a series of two-dimensional confrontations.

Scant attention is paid to continuity and development in the storyline, and in particular the behavior of the villain seems dictated by no logic or consistency other than the desire of the scriptwriters to keep him as nasty

as possible. Though parts of the script are inoffensive, and there are even one or two effective moments, I can confidently say that on the script level **Fast Company** is without any important redeeming qualities.

What interest the film does have lies entirely in Cronenberg's direction — to such an extent, indeed, that **Fast Company** can almost serve as a textbook example of the limited extent to which a director can salvage a really impossible project. Not surprisingly, the movie's main asset is its visual style — quiet, precise and straight-forward, with that element of neat, cool detachment that Cronenberg shares with directors like Monte Hellman, Terence Malick, and his gifted fellow-Canadians Don Shebib and Denys Arcand. Direction like this is the very reverse of the kind of flashy meretriciousness of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, and which has also raised its ugly head in, for example, Jack Nicholson's *Goin' South* and Jonathan Demme's *The Last Embrace*.

In any case, the best moments in **Fast Company** are those in which Cronenberg can free himself entirely of the dialogue and the characters — notably in the many superb scenes of cars being tuned up before races, of helmeted drivers' heads in the deafening roar of the cockpit, of mechanics lovingly dissect-

ing powerful machines in the workshop. As always, Cronenberg is aware of the power of images by themselves, without commentary or emphasis: so much can be shown that doesn't need to be, that *can't* be, explained in terms of words. This is the mark of the purest kind of filmmaker — a Hitchcock, an Ozu, a Bresson, a Rohmer — and if Cronenberg doesn't exactly occupy their exalted station, he is nevertheless of their fraternity.

Despite Cronenberg's gifts as evidenced in this film, though, I can't in good conscience recommend *Fast Company* with much enthusiasm to anyone but dedicated students of the art of cinema, since the banality of the scenario can never be disguised for long. Better far to pay another visit to *Shivers*, *Rabid*, or *The Brood* — truly accomplished expressions of perhaps the most imaginative vision in Canadian films today.

Bill Beard

David Cronenberg's The Brood

d. David Cronenberg, asst. d. John Board, Libby Bowden, sc. David Cronenberg, dial. ed. Brian Holland, asst. dial. ed. Lois Tupper, ph. Mark Irwin, ed. Allan Collins, asst. ed. Carol Zeifman, sd. Bryan Day, boom Tom Mather, sd. ed. Peter Burgess, asst. sd. ed. Jeremy Maclaverty, sd. re. rec. Joe Grimaldi, a.d. Carol Spier, set dec. Angelo Stea, m. Howard Shore, cost. Delphine White, continuity Nancy Eagles, make-up Shonagh Jabour, l.p. Oliver Reed, Samantha Eggar, Art Hindle, Cindy Hinds, Nuala Fitzgerald, Henry Beckman, Susan Hogan, Michael Magee Gary McKeehan, Bob Silverman, Joseph Shaw, Felix Silla, John Ferguson, Larry Solway, Rainer Schwartz, Nicholas Campbell, exec. p. Pierre David, Victor Solnicki, p. Claude Heroux, p.asst. Maureen Fitzgerald, Bob Wertheimer, p. manager Gwen Iveson, p. secretary Trudy Work, p.c. The Brood Inc., col. 35mm, (year) 1978, running time 92 minutes.

There are these basic, common fears: mutilation, dying and the malevolent unknown. There are the surefire mechanics of suspense, shock and gore. Even a novice filmmaker can manipulate them for a strong, gut-level response. In the audience, we need not think or even learn the names of our fears, we will react anyway. Total titillation. Walk home with nothing more horrifying

than the dregs of an adrenalin rush. It's fun and profitable. It's what's being done in *Alien*, *Prophecy* and *Halloween*. It's what David Cronenberg did in *Shivers* and *Rabid*. It's *not* what he's doing in *The Brood*.

A few horror films, *The Innocents*, *Psycho*, *The Tenant*, work on the head and the heart: a definition of 'grotesque', by John Ruskin, "...the expression in a moment, by a series of symbols thrown together in bold and fearless connection, of truth..." Usually, the truth expressed concerns the inner landscape of one or more characters. Imagination gives understanding. Understanding awakens pity and terror for a condition that may have nothing to do with one's own fears. It can be a very instructive horror.

Cronenberg structures *The Brood* and engages the imagination with a series of mysteries. What is the dangerous flaw in Dr. Raglan's radical therapy, Psychoplasms? Who or what is murdering the people that Nola Carveth, Dr. Raglan's star patient, hates? How are the murders and the therapy connected? These fuel the action and encourage us to look for clues, to try and beat Cronenberg to the punchline. But, while we're doing it, he's feeding us scenes that lead to an awareness of a second, unstated mystery. Is Nola Carveth really crazy? If so, what are the causes and forms of her madness?

The climax of the film links the two sets of mysteries and satisfies the demands of the plot (and the audience) in as gruesome a manner as could be wished. It also reveals the title creatures as reflections of Nola. These reflections spark others: Nola's daughter as a reflection of her, Nola as a reflection of her mother, her ex-husband, Frank, as Nola's father. This is what sparks our understanding of Nola's inner life and the causes of her disturbance.

The success of the reflections depends on the clarity of the character sketches that precede them. Nola's mother, Juliana, is given like this: We see Nola in therapy, claiming her mother beat her as a child. Is she telling the truth, or as the plot suggests, is she making a distorted confession to beating her own daughter? Cut to Nola's mother babysitting Nola's daughter. She's getting primly drunk. Her behavior with the child suggests nothing so much as a little girl playing grown-up. An old photo shows Nola sick in a hospital bed, while Juliana's bright smile for the camera is a clear denial of her daughter's in-

jury. Her comments — that she *never could* find out why Nola kept waking up cut and bruised — show that twenty years later, she's still dying.

Anyone familiar with newspaper stories on the subject, will recognize in Juliana a typical, abusing parent. To Cronenberg's undying credit, nobody stands up and spells this out for us. Child abuse is not a fashionable subject to be exploited for thrills and cheap moralizing in *The Brood*, it merely happens to be one of the central concerns of the story.

There are holes in the presentation of the other characters. We learn, for instance, that Nola married Frank for his sanity, but we never learn why he married her. We never see how Nola interacts with her daughter. These holes, with one exception, fog the reflections of the climax only slightly. The one exception is Dr. Raglan. We're told he is a prominent and respectable psychiatrist, but this image is destroyed when, in one afternoon, he callously evicts all his highly unstable, highly dependent, live-in patients. This makes him the unfeeling mad scientist, but the climax destroys that image and paints him as the dedicated and caring therapist. None of this chaos is cleared up by the casting and acting of Oliver Reed in the role. His arrogant thug aura is fun to watch, but does nothing to raise Dr. Raglan above the level of plot device. Despite this, Dr. Raglan's fate is wholly appropriate to his place in the story and a snappy comment on the practice of radical psychiatry.

There are a few other flaws in the script — a therapy scene that's a bit too long and a bit too flat and a couple of scenes with detectives that are pure exposition — but none of these detract from the effectiveness of the film. Cronenberg handles the suspense well. The middle of the babysitting sequence, which has begun calmly enough, is the beginning of the killer's approach, a suspense sequence which ends, and ends the babysitting sequence, in bloody murder. The murders, themselves, are fine set-pieces of bizarre composition, sharp cutting and brutal action. The special effects are grisly and convincing.

Mark Irwin's lighting and photography create a world of thick, normal surfaces and suggest, without resorting to distortion tactics, the ugly, unacknowledged passions beneath. It's an atmosphere ideally suited to the story and characters and that seems, quite natur-

ally and unself-consciously, to be very Canadian.

Of the performances in *The Brood*, only Michael Magee's as Inspector Mrazek, seems wrong. Art Hindle is convincing as a low-key, unemotional man coping with his fears and his deep love for his daughter in a low-key, unemotional way. Samantha Eggart as Nola treads the fine line between the obviously sane and the obviously insane with sympathetic and eerie effect. Nuala Fitzgerald shows all the tension, fear and self-deception in Nola's mother. The best performance, though, comes from Bob Silverman as a victim of Dr. Raglan's methods. The part is small

and mostly comic. Silverman milks his lines for all they're worth and gets more laughs from bits of business. At the same time his bitterness and obsessions make him a menacing figure constantly on the verge of losing control. He's like one of those eccentrics who used to inhabit *The Avengers* in the days of Emma Peel, but much more effective.

The Brood closed in Toronto in less than a month. I suspect its potential audiences were more interested in *Alien* and *Prophecy*. But in twenty years, when they're long forgotten, *The Brood* will be a television and revival showing favourite and just as enjoyable then as now.

Andrew Dowler

Theodore J. Flicker's Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fang

d. Theodore J. Flicker, asst.d. Mireille Goulet, Pierre Poirier, sc. Theodore J. Flicker, casting Howard Ryshpan, ph. Francois Protat, camera op. Allen C. Smith, sp.ph.effects Michael Albrechtson, sup.ed. Stan Cole, sd. Ken Helley-Ray, sd.ed. Patrick Drummond, Ellen Adams, continuity Monique Champagne, a.d. Seamus Flannery, m. Lewis Furey, cost. Francois Barbeau, makeup Marie-Angele Protat, Diane Simard, l.p. Stephen Rosenberg, Alex Karras, Guy L'Ecuyer, Joy Coghill, Claude Gai, Earl Pennington, Victor Desy, Marfa Richler, Thor Bishopric, Yvon Leroux, Basil Fitzgibbon, Walter Mashev. Jill Frappier, Nan Stewart, Deena Baikowitz, Ainsley Robertson, John Wildman, Kirsten Bishopric, Marc Goldstein, Geoffrey Kramer, Stephanie Brandman, Peter Tanaka, Ryan Campbell, Rona Sinclair, exec.p. John Flaxman, p. Harry Gulkin, p.manager Mychele Boudrias, p.c. Gulkin Productions, (year) 1976, col. 35mm, running time 80 minutes, dist. Gulkin Productions/Saguenay Films.

In recent years, feature films made for a children's audience or "family films," as the industry likes to call them, have been something of a graveyard for directors. The 1976 version of *The Blue Bird*, directed by elder statesman George Cukor, was disparaged and ignored. Bryan Forbes, who had a reputation as a sensitive maker of films with youngsters, saw that reputation damaged when *International Velvet* — even with Tatum O'Neal — did



Stephen Rosenberg who plays Jacob Two-Two awaits the verdict that will sentence him to children's prison

so badly that M.G.M. would not even release figures on it. To be sure, the stature of Walt Disney Productions remains high, but now it largely rests on their past triumphs and the occasional (for them) innovative idea like *Freaky Friday*. By and large, however, the output from Disney is so trivial that even such traditionally favorable observers like Judith Ripp of *Parents' Magazine* have taken the studio to task for their shallowness. In spite of this, these films continue to do good business, for fairly obvious reasons:

they enable parents to send their kids to the movies without the moral qualms that attend even so innocent a film as *Star Wars*, and they enable exhibitors to make a killing on the concessions.

Once in a while, though, a film does come along which tries to be entertaining for children and has some artistic pretensions as well. Such a picture was Alan Parker's *Bugsy Malone* which, in spite of its kinky overtones, was really just a game of dress-up carried to a logical conclusion, made for a generation which, because of television, is more cinematically literate than its predecessors. And *Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fang* should have had a similar effect and have made a fair bid to become a classic in the manner of *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Wizard of Oz*. That the Harry Gulkin-Ted Flicker production is not really up to those standards is a disappointment, but perhaps understandable in the light of the troubles that have surrounded it.

The story of the "repatriation" of Mordecai Richler's best selling children's novel has already been told (*Cinema Canada*, No. 31), and the further problems which Harry Gulkin encountered may be summarized briefly. The American distributor, Cinema Shares, lost interest in *Jacob Two-Two* after some negative test screenings in 1977 and, for the next year or so, stories appeared telling of how the producer was trying, without much success, to find an alternative source to handle it. With 1979 designated as International Year of The Child, Gulkin decided to do it himself, and in March opened the film at Montreal's Snowdon Theatre. Soon, the cast-off film was outdrawing Disney's *The North Avenue Irregulars*. That was enough for Saguenay Films to pick it up.

As finally released, the film, at 80 minutes in length, is able to avoid the extraneous padding that often causes family films to sprawl unnecessarily. Jacob (Stephen Rosenberg), a two-plus-two-plus-two-year-old who has to say everything twice because no one listens to him the first time, falls asleep in Mount Royal Park after running away from a grocer (Earl Pennington) who threatens to have him arrested for insulting an adult. In his dream, he finds himself before Mr. Justice Rough, (also played by Pennington), and a jury-cum-choir which sings platitudes at him ("It's for your own good...



La Presse's Paris correspondent Bernard Robitaille masked as Richard Nixon faces off with director Michael Rubbo masked as Valéry Giscard d'Estaing

to the documentary genre. Rubbo is different. He appears an open filmmaker interested in culture and politics, and above all in film. Rubbo shares with the unit B filmmakers (Colin Low, Wolf Koenig, Tom Daley) a playfulness and an aesthetic delight in the medium. His films have the humor of *Lonely Boy*, the sense of social responsibility of *Back-Breaking Leaf* and the commitment to entertain, even in as dry a subject as astronomy (the NFB film *Univers*).

Now, to the case at hand, Michael Rubbo's latest film, *Solzhenitsyn's Children Are Making a Lot of Noise in Paris* (1979). The title is as double-edged as the subject matter. One almost expects a tour of the political sandboxes of Paris or the discovery of a new wave of "flower children" emanating from Truffaut's cultural garden. Instead Rubbo presents us with an update on the upset of the state of political philosophy in Paris, where philosophy and politics have been mixed these past two centuries. Did you know that both Marx and Lenin spent significant time in the cafés of Paris?

Political philosophy is in itself a very non-visual subject for a film. Rubbo does all he can to respect the concepts but to humanize their delivery to us. First of all he, himself, stranger to Parisian politics, appears in the film. To introduce himself and us to the ideas and personalities, he takes as his guide,

Bernard Robitaille, Paris correspondent for the Montreal newspaper *La Presse*. And during the presidential election of 1977 — the first election in forty years to threaten France with a Leftist Government — he talks to the political thinkers of Paris, and he discovers why France will not have a Communist Government — there is a serious crisis in the Left. The Communists, the Maoists, the Leninists, all the factions of the left are undergoing an identity crisis, and Solzhenitsyn, his stature, his writing, his moral courage point to the heart of this crisis — the Russian experiment has not proved to be what it set out to be.

This rather simple observation may prove to be more revolutionary in its practical ramifications in world politics than the Revolution itself. (An exaggeration I make knowingly for dramatic effect.) The ripple effect from Paris outward is certain to touch us here in Canada where political and cultural identity could consequently blur even more.

Rubbo's approach is straightforward. He talks first to Jean Ellenstein, the philosopher of the French Communist Party. Communism in France is very different from the Russian experience. The French Communist Party believes in pluralism, in democracy. One by one, the victories of Communism are examined, via first hand participants. From Russia, the Jewish dissident, Victor

Feinberg. His protest of the invasion of Czechoslovakia was staged in Red Square. It lasted less than a minute. Beaten by KGB agents, he was taken away and institutionalized as insane. The "Cancer Ward" tries to cure all dissent in the USSR. Now in France, he is free. From Czechoslovakia proper, Rubbo interviews a former politician whose trial under Stalin foreshadowed the inevitability of the 1968 events in Czechoslovakia. If the Czechs could flirt with freedom, who would be next? Perhaps the Russian people themselves.

In one of the last interviews in the film Rubbo speaks, or rather is spoken to by Bernard Henri-Levy, the key man among the new philosophers, the young political thinkers who are attempting to turn France away from the Left. (Very reminiscent of the revival of Conservatism, neo-Conservatism as it is called in the United States.) Levy is ascetic, in black and white with his sand colored furniture. Austere and rather hypnotic. He identifies strongly with Solzhenitsyn's artistic power and moral courage. The Gulag ended all preconceptions about Communism. French Communism is not exempt. It is as great a threat to Democracy as is the Russian experience. But in France "the Barbarism," as he calls French Communism, wears a new face, but it remains what it always was.

French Communism and Russian Communism are not alone in coming under critical scrutiny. Rubbo and Robitaille speak to the authors of a book praising Maoist China. Having spent two years in China consequent to their first book, they wrote a second book condemning the Maoist experience. "The Enemy is From Within." They condemn the control the Communist Party holds over all aspects of life in China. If you want to marry, you have to ask permission of the local Party Committee. If you want to have a child, the Committee will tell you, if and when. There is no freedom of choice.

And onward to the other experiments in the Communist ideal — Vietnam, Cuba, Cambodia. Each in its turn is condemned in spite of Rubbo's own kind words about his Cuban experience. Each has become far from ideal. Each Communist State has created its own Gulag.

The reader might conclude that Rubbo's film is an anti-Communist tract. No at all. It is a film about disaffection of Communists with Communism as it exists. In this sense it is a disturbing

it hurts us more than it hurts you"). He is sentenced to two years, two months, two days, two hours and two minutes in the infamous Children's Prison on Slimers' Island ("from which no brats return"). In the custody of the scaly Master Fish (Guy L'Ecuyer) and the beak-nosed Mistress Fowl (Joy Coghill), he is taken to meet the warden, the Hooded Fang (Alex Karras), a roaring former wrestler who determines to break the boy of his duplicative habit. However, Jacob, with the aid of the representatives of Child Power, The Intrepid Shapiro (Marfa Richler) and The Fearless O'Toole (Thor Bishopric), is able to discover that the terrible creature is himself quite the child, and so is able to liberate the small prisoners.

It is to Ted Flicker's credit that he does not try to embroider this fairly simple fable and its message that the sensitivities of children should be respected, with any great flashiness, even if it does mean a rather uncinematic reliance on Richler's essentially verbal humor. Where he does use effects, it is with restraint, as in the trial scene, where Francois Protat's low angle photography heightens Jacob's feeling of insignificance before the implacable Adult Law. The design of the Children's Prison, though it could be criticized for looking too artificial, is a suitable surreal experience for a child exposed to animated cartoons and television commercials, while the jeans-and-jersey uniforms of Child Power form a link to Jacob's siblings' games in the prologue (again, the same persons double the roles), and the comic heroes they (and Richler) dote on. The only effect that really does not work is the gray makeup on the child prisoners, which makes them look uncomfortably like Romerian zombies.

Since the film is so verbal, Flicker and Gulkin were fortunate to be able to get the ideal person to play Jacob in Stephen Rosenberg. Neither too cute, nor too clever, he is justification enough for having the film made in Montreal, when one considers how a Disney child like Sean Marshall or a "personality" like Jimmy Osmond would have done it had it been shot in California as originally planned. Thor Bishopric and especially Marfa Richler (daughter of Mordecai) are outstanding among the 200 or so Montreal area children who appear alongside Stephen. Of the adult characters, the Judge, Master Fish, Mistress Fowl and

Mister Fox (Claude Gai), the head guard and saboteur of toys, are all creations worthy of Lewis Carroll. But Alex Karras is much too broad in his characterization of the Hooded Fang to be either menacing or pitiful, and this is a major weakness in Flicker's treatment.

By far, the greatest problem with *Jacob Two-Two*, aside from the Slime Squad, is in the variable quality of the sound. Some voices like the children's and Alex Karra's are relatively clear, but others like Guy L'Ecuyer's and Victor Desy's (who is not well used as the hapless lawyer Louis Loser), are almost hopelessly blurred. The songs are impossible to understand, and Lewis Furey, in an attempt to be gentle and innocent, winds up sounding like Cat Stevens instead.

It should not be thought that the film of *Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fang* is a disaster, for the large audiences of children that have seen it during the matinee-only-screenings which Gulkin arranged as an interesting experiment that also saves money, are quite attentive to the story. There is little of the restlessness that is usual in the auditoriums when Disney films play. But there is also too little of the excitement found in the book. It would seem that the familiar problems of lack of time, money and coordination continue to bedevil the attempts of Canadian filmmakers like Harry Gulkin to translate literature into cinema.

J. Paul Costabile

Michael Rubbo's Solzhenitsyn's Children Are Making a Lot of Noise in Paris

d. Michael Rubbo, special collaboration Louis-Bernard Robetaille, sc. and narr. Michael Rubbo, ph. Andraes Poulsson, adnl.ph. Michael Edols, Michel Thomas-D'hoste, asst.camera Serge Lafortune, ed. Michael Rubbo, asst.ed. Stephan Steinhouse, loc.sd. Joseph Champagne, sd.ed. Andre Galbrand, asst.by Danuta Klis, re rec. Jean Pierre Joutel, Adrian Croll, unit admin. Janet Preston, exec.p. Arthur Hammond, p. Marrin Canell, p.c. The National Film Board, (year) 1979, col. 16mm, running time 87 minutes, 21 seconds.

While the rest of the world is struggling with its own changing nature, and the attendant angst and excitement, we, here in Canada, are looking for heroes. In no area is the search more intense than in the media. Media and culture, the right hand and the left, scrutinize and are scrutinized. Film is no exception. Indeed there is an implicit certainty in some circles that if Canada develops a feature film industry all will be well in this land.

That is quite a responsibility for the cultural artifact, the film, and for its maker. Think of it. A film is made, finally screened, on television or in a

theatre. It's like a sheep slaughtered at Delphi — inwards to be examined and analysed for portents of portents. First glimpse must reveal Canadian content. A sigh of relief then with the work of a Peter Pearson. Mine it, mine it for deep meaning. It is after all certifiably a national product. Very self-conscious. Often self-righteous. What of the subtle, non-overtly Canadian work of Michael Rubbo? It doesn't take place in Canada. The ideas aren't Canadian in any particular way. No wonder. He's Australian. Yes, dismiss him. Well, he does work for the National Film Board. They're all aesthetes and Communists. They, he, are of no account.

This very process has, in the past, lost to us, great artists. John Grierson immediately comes to mind. It would be shameful, if the same attitude, prompted Michael Rubbo to leave Canada.

In the past ten years Rubbo is responsible for at least two films that can rightly claim and have received recognition beyond our borders, *The Sad Song of Yellow Skin* (1971) about the Vietnamese interface with the West during the Vietnam War and *Waiting for Fidel* (1974) about an attempted interface between a Canadian capitalist and his guide, politician Joey Smallwood and Fidel Castro. In both films Rubbo, as narrator or visual participant has placed himself as filmmaker in the unusual position of explorer.

He admits interest, curiosity, sometimes bewilderment, but never the distant sophomoric or all-knowing sensibility that has in the past lent the label dogmatic, or more subtly, educational,

film, and in its way, a courageous film. Rubbo, by poking his camera into the entrails of contemporary political thought, de-mythologizes the canonized experiments in Communism. Whether they be Leninists or Maoists. Does that mean that Rubbo implies advocacy of Democracy? Does it mean that there are limits to the potential of Government involvement in the private life? Or is he asking the question, "Can we live with the anxiety democracy promotes in individuals?" His own behavior in the film suggests the latter is a possibility. Certainly the figure of Solzhenitsyn, what he stands for, is the only positive element in the film.

Which brings me back to Michael Rubbo, the National Film Board and the Canadian audience. This film was produced in Canada, and one can be very proud that such a film could be made in this country. The film is mature, probing and satisfying on an intellectual as well as aesthetic level. And yet there is a question about the life of this film here in Canada.

It is appalling to learn that this film has already been sold to PBS in the

United States and shown at the Film Forum in New York. It has yet to be shown here except for screenings at universities and at the Grierson Seminar in Orillia. They love Mike Rubbo in the U.S. and embrace his work. Apparently we don't. One doesn't know who we are, but we exist, because Rubbo's films have met a lot of resistance here in Canada. He sent the film to the U.S. first because he's had too much non-response to his films at the CBC and because his films are only routinely distributed via district offices of the NFB. Apparently the CBC is not alone. The film was raked over the coals at this year's Grierson Seminar.

This is very sad given the filmmaker and his work. Rubbo is a major artist. Perhaps the reason, to harken back to the beginning of this review, is his interest in international subject matter, lack of overt Canadian content. If this is so, the loss is ours. Next year Michael Rubbo will be filmmaker in residence at Harvard University in Boston.

Kenneth Dancyger

Diane Létourneau's Les Servantes du Bon Dieu

d. Diane Létourneau with the collaboration of the Petites Soeurs de la Sainte-Famille, *resch.* Diane Létourneau, *sc.* Louise Carrier, *ph.* Jean-Charles Tremblay, *asst. ph.* Pierre Duceppe, *ed.* Josée Beaudet, *sd.* Serge Beauchemin, *lighting* Jacques Paquet, *lighting asst.* Denis Hamel, *p.* Claude Godbout, Marcia Couëlle, *p.c.* Les Productions Prisma with la SDICC, Radio-Québec, and L'OTEO, *col.* 16mm, (year) 1978, *running time* 90.

In art, death is rarely represented as a peaceful closing of the eyes.

Diane Létourneau's 90 min. documentary *Les Servantes Du Bon Dieu* (The Handmaidens of God), filmed among the nuns of the convent of Saint-Famille in Sherbrooke, Québec, is above all a film about passing on. It is about a dying order of women. Their convent, established in the 1890s, now faces closure because the sisterhood cannot attract youthful recruits. The average age of the sisters of Saint-Famille is 60.

The film reveals the tranquility of their aging. No words, written or spok-



Two "petites" sisters of the Sainte-Famille
photo: Yves Ste-Marie

en, can transmit the humility and serenity we witness in the eyes and faces of the nuns whom we meet in this film. In

our jagged age, it is a provocative confrontation.

The sisters of Saint-Famille were organized and still function primarily as a domestic service organization for the priesthood. In the film we see them at their daily duties and dedications, laundering, cooking, cleaning. Theirs are simple lives, lived with deliberation and a good deal of humor.

No one could fail to be captivated by some of the spunky, guileless old ladies who make their debut in *Les Servantes du Bon Dieu*. One feisty octogenerian tells us that she adopted a black habit, when most of the others wear white, because she likes black, always has, then gets up and shuffles off camera. There is zest also to the two nuns who live in the garage, to be closer to the automobiles for which they are responsible, who we find in serious discussion about the relative merits of the Pontiac and Chevrolet!

The nuns are curiously natural, though sometimes shy in front of the camera. But it is the qualities we least expect to find among such women, namely their independence of mind and firm pride of vocation, that make them so attractive.

One senses that Létourneau was herself surprised by the personalities she encountered. Through a series of interviews, which we soon realize are of the same format (why did she join the convent, at what age, is her work satisfying?) we discover the wealth of character among the women living in this religious collectivity. The interviews also reveal something about conditions for Québec women early in the century when the choice of a religious vocation often meant the only access to a career and life outside the home. (Until the Quiet Revolution, religious societies had responsibility for education and health care in Quebec, and many women made prestigious careers in these areas.)

In the end, however, the repetition in the interviews becomes tedious, and works against the tension of discovery. The director's zealotry in one area underlines a curious gap in another.

On one level, Létourneau is fascinated by the simple satisfaction with which all the work in the convent is done. There are languid shots of hands meticulously folding linens and ladling soup, silent views of women at work dusting some part of the sanctuary. Yet when the cardinal, speaking for the priests to whom the service is rendered, says with uneasy dignity, that the first quality of the nuns is their faithfulness

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in service, we sense feminist indignation. The paradox comes when the director uncovers nothing but expressions of contentment among the nuns as labourers. If Létourneau meant to comment on church hierarchy and politics then it would have been more appropriate to treat the question of hierarchy within the convent itself. In fact, the day to day running of the convent, the people behind its apparently smooth operation, are never seen.

It is a priest, whose habit it is to ring for the dinner that the good nuns have prepared for him, who makes one of the telling comments on the experience Létourneau documents. Gently, he reminds us that these women face death without fear.

The final images of the film show the preparation of and closing of a coffin, and the procession of the sisterhood that accompanies it to the grave. It is rare footage, not only because cameras are usually foreign to even semi-cloistered convents, but because the audience

shares in the intimacy of the ritual.

A word should be said about the cinematography by Jean-Charles Tremblay, who has approached his task with the same thoughtful concern for detail that he found among those he was photographing. He understood the quality of silence in the vaulted architecture, in the swaying habits of the nuns, in their work, and, at his best, toned his lighting and movement to those elements.

Most of us adopt a certain reverence of perception to the religious sisters we encounter in life, and perhaps the mystique exists nowhere stronger than in Quebec where, at one time, almost every family sent one of its daughters into religious life.

Change in Quebec means that convents such as the home of the sisters of Saint-Famille will possibly disappear. This film helps us to understand the attraction and the reality of the choices *les servantes du bon dieu* have made.

Joan Irving

even more strikingly, the film itself reiterates Shilling's style through its similar use of color, texture, and faces. Vivid and colorful settings for his on-camera interviews often repeat the tones and hues just previously seen in a Shilling portrait. The words of the narration are as direct as the honest expressions captured in the painted portraits. As well, the film incorporates bold contrasts of texture and tone to highlight special moments.

As documented in this film, Shilling's life as an Indian artist has been one of continuing struggle, reaching its lowest point in 1975 when he faced death from heart disease at age 34. A series of self-portraits made over several years clearly reveals a young man struggling with inner and outer conflict. Facing death was a turning point for Shilling. The filmmakers, having shown us the vitality in his work and surroundings, at this point in the film include a sequence utterly drained of colour, a bleak wintry drive through barren landscape that works effectively as metaphor. Following successful heart surgery, Shilling's life and the screen itself become infused with a resurgence of color and activity. We see Shilling surrounded by family and friends, building a home, studio and art gallery on the Rama reserve. Final shots of the artist and his wife Millie with their first baby convey a wonderful feeling of harmony. Photographed inside the home they have built, this closing sequence of family portraits provides a simple and poignant finish to a film about cycles of life.

The Beauty of My People has won the awards for Best Direction and Best Scriptwriting in the American Indian Film Festival held in San Francisco, 1979. It is Alan Collins' directorial debut, though he is known for his editing expertise on such features as *The Brood*, *Love at First Sight*, *The Clown Murders*, *I Escaped from Devil's Island*, *Von Richthofen and Brown* and television work including *The Newcomers '1911'* (directed by Eric Till), *We've Come a Long Way Together* (Don Shebib), and *Backlot Canadiana* (Peter Rowe).

The experience of viewing *The Beauty of my People* is an inspiring one. Devoid of sentimentality and cliché, the film simply and powerfully shows us one man in the process of transcending limitations. In a remarkable way, *The Beauty of My People* urges each one of us to become who

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The Beauty of My People

d. Alan Collins, sc. Gary George, narr. Sherman Maness, ph. Dennis Miller, Robert New, ed. Alan Collins, sd. David Lee, Terry Cooke, m. Court Stone, p. Alan Collins, p.c. Nova Picture Productions (Toronto), col. 16mm, (year) 1978, running time 30 minutes, dist. National Film Board of Canada.

"I paint because there is no other way to express the beauty of my people," says Arthur Shilling, the Ojibway artist who is the subject of this award-winning documentary. Similarly, filmmaker Alan Collins expresses the powerful beauty of his subject by structuring the film along a narrative line of personal, human struggle, and by meticulously attending to stylistic elements that coincide with Shilling's own visual work. The result is a film that achieves harmonious unity with its subject.

As a painter, Arthur Shilling's work is characterized by a bold use of color and broad brush strokes which critic Peter White has called "reminiscent of Van Gogh." He is primarily a portrait

artist, using his relatives and friends on the Rama reserve as subjects. Collins' film shows us dozens of these portraits, along with the people and landscape which inspired them. But



Arthur Shilling, an Ojibway artist who faced death at 34
photo: Rudi Bies

we are, to believe in and express our talents. As Shilling says of his own life-work, "The only time I'm going to stop is when I'm dead."

Joyce Nelson

Night Flight

d. Desmond Davis, sc. Alvin Goldman, ph. Paul van der Linden, ed. Ion Webster, sd. Henri Blondeau, sd. ed. Danuta Klis, sd. mix. Michel Deccombes, p. designer Bernard Durand, a.d. Bernard Durand, set dec. Real Ouellette, props Francis Calder, Herminio Bihete, André Gagnon, m.d. André Gagnon, cost. Françoise Laplante, l.p. Trevor Howard, Bo Svenson, Celine Lomez, Ted Follows, exec. p. Lawrence F. Mihlon, p. Howard Ryshpan, Susan Lewis, p.c. Marlow Pictures Inc., (year 0 1978, col. 35mm, running time 23 minutes, 55 seconds dist. The Singer Company and The Learning Corporation of America, a subsidiary of Columbia Films.

Somewhere this plane would founder in darkness... Drowned by the night... Night's apple trees that wait upon the dawn with all their flowers that serve as yet no purpose. Night perfume-laden, that hides the lambs asleep and flowers that have no color yet.

—Antoine de Saint Exupéry
1932

Night Flight is the story of men who risked their lives or the lives of others to deliver the mail during the early days and nights of aviation. "Safety first was the obsession of those early days. Planes were to leave only an hour before dawn, to land only an hour after sunset," writes St. Exupéry.

In his novel, St. Exupéry develops two characters, Fabien, the pilot and Rivière, who sends his men into the depths of night, against the advice of others. His story is a classic. High school children read it in their 2nd year French classes. English majors read it in their Comparative Literature Studies. The prose of St. Exupéry is poetic.

"The night flights went on and on like a persistent malady,... help must be given to these men who with hand and knees and breast to breast were

wrestling with the darkness, who knew and only knew an unseen world of shifting things, whence they must struggle, out, as from an ocean."

What could a filmmaker do to recreate these words in a visual form? Almost an impossible task, one might say. One would first have to decide whether a poetic/dramatic film is possible. Peter Watkins was successful with **Edvard Munch**, but his film lasted almost three hours.

The photography is the most outstanding element of the film **Night Flight**. Cinematographer Paul van der Linden certainly deserves credit for this. **Night Flight** opens with a red sun-streaked sky. The image is captivating and as the titles appear, one suddenly notices a tiny biplane approaching from a far corner, creating a hypnotic effect. The viewer watches the vehicle as it grows against the sky. One is again entranced by the lovely image of a plane taking off at night, cradled by a fire-lit runway.

From a commercial point of view, the principal objection certainly would not be the slick 35mm presentation. The major problem with the film is its inability to evoke an emotional response from the audience. The film seems to need a touch of roughness to make the story believable. One wants to feel that the skies are treacherous. Black and white 16mm footage would have helped to create a rougher effect, but it was out of the question — artistic qualities are

important, but distribution values are godly.

Even the pilot Fabien (Bo Svenson) seems rather soft in character. The 20th Century exalts in presenting feminized-male roles. If one wants to establish the impression of a manly character, one does not always want to see an actor gazing dreamily from his comfortable bed or talking sweetly to his wife.

How does one create a dramatic context? How does one give a character depth? Fabien's personality is non-existent in the film. Who is he? The conflict seems to be that the film continually tries to take off in a dramatic direction, then in a romantic direction. Unfortunately the two directions fail to be integrated and the viewer goes up and down as often as the plane.

Superficially constructed scenes (man kisses wife goodbye at the airport) do not create substance. Buenos Aires, ostensibly the locale, does not become Buenos Aires just because a sign says so. (**Midnight Express** was shot in Malta and not in Sun Valley for this reason. And wives who sit around fireplaces thinking of their men makes one think of the old saying... sugar and spice and everything nice...

The Rock Hudson-Doris Day image of man and woman should have been circumvented by a slightly more realistic relationship (e.g. **The Glass Cell** by Geissendorfer). Perhaps a more realistic decision would have been to eliminate the female element altogether. The film



Fabien (Bo Svenson), a brave man who pilots night mail planes

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is only 23 minutes in length and only so much can be developed within that limited amount of time. This is a long standing problem with films that try to adhere to the story line of a book.

Without the false romance, the film would have been stronger. One deathly shot shows Celine Lomez (a wife who doesn't look very upset about the fact that her new husband may soon die) gazing out towards a lake. The film constantly tells — with a voice over narrative — rather than shows what one should feel.

The strongest moments of *Night Flight* occur during a perilous storm. A plane — a cloud ridden sky — solitude. And the most poetic moment transpires as the plane's fuel runs out, and it falls into the sky — an excellent finale — but unfortunately the film takes off again in another direction. Why? To destroy a poetic moment is certainly the worst artistic sin.

Night Flight has already played on CBS prime time. It has also been sold to NBC and ABC affiliates, and European markets are presently bidding for the film. As yet, CBC and CTV have not touched it.

The Singer Company spent as much on advertising *Night Flight* as they did

on the \$300,000 production. Marlow Pictures, Inc. headed by Howard Ryshpan and Susan A. Lewis, completed the film in two months, with 10 days of actual shooting at Cooper Airport in St. Lazare. The airplane appearing in *Night Flight* is a 50-year-old Curtiss Fledgling and was rented along with pilot Ken Bertch from Cole Palen of The Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome in Upper New York State for \$3500 and expenses.

Producer Howard Ryshpan is best known as an actor and director of theatre and for his work as first assistant director and casting director of *Lies My Father Told Me*. Susan Lewis recently worked on the film *Superman*.

Night Flight premiered in the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. It was a first class affair with dignitaries and heads of state in attendance as evidenced by the secret security guards. Their perfume company Guerlain, who originated the scent 'Vol de Nuit,' handed out elaborately enveloped samples of its product. And Howard Ryshpan thought, "They must think we live in some quaint townhouse in Montreal."

When the film was over, the \$20 used office supply furniture went back. Marlow Productions lives in a walk up

on Sherbrooke west. The only element of 'elegance' is the gold frame which circumscribes the *Night Flight* poster. So it goes with American sponsored Canadian productions.

Lois Siegel

cinema canada



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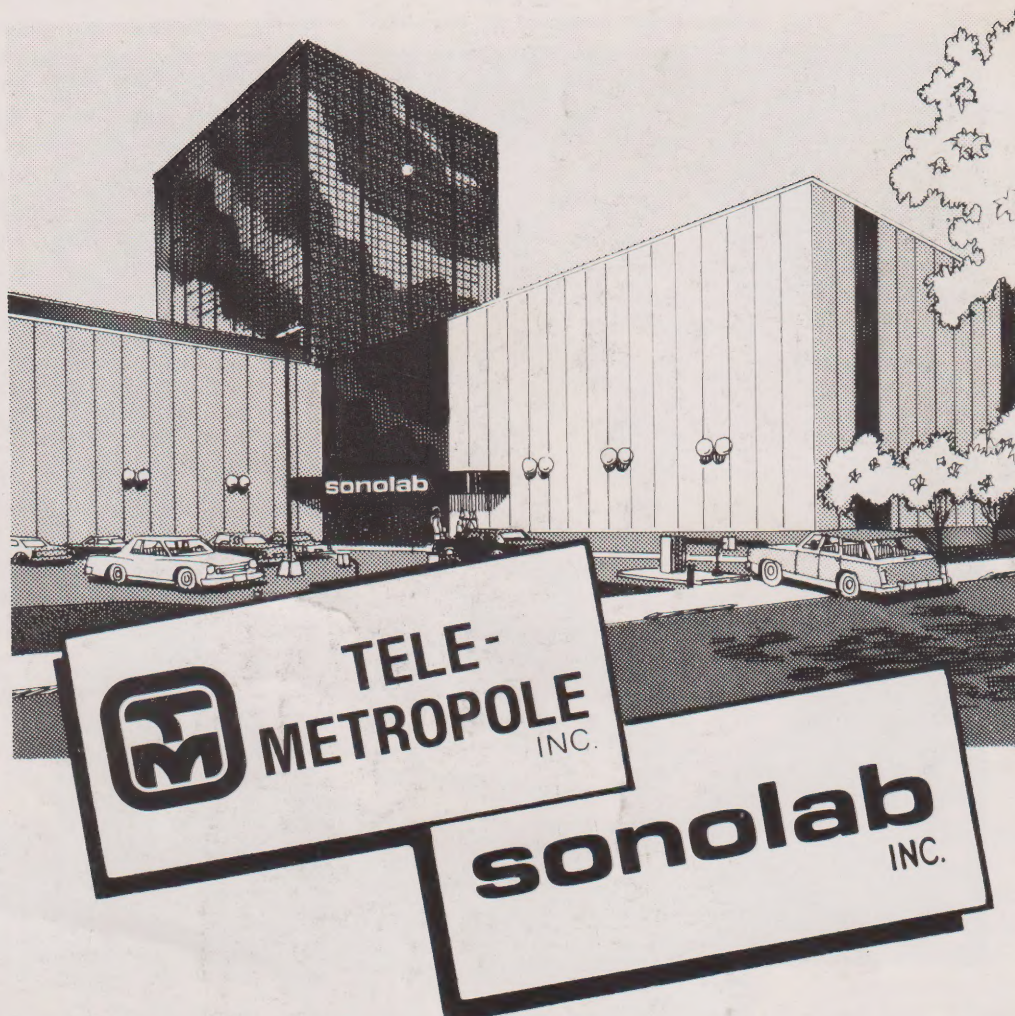
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